



Kapiti Fly Fishing Club

January 2022 Newsletter

This month's cover photo: Gregory du Bern grandson Gene aged 8 years-old and mum looking at the trout at the Tongariro Trout Centre, photo taken by his granddad.

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Club activities

Date	Event	Coordinator
Monday 24 January	Club night – BBQ Otaihangā Domain	Malcolm
Monday 1 February	Clubs Committee Meeting being held at WBC	Malcolm
10 to 13 February	Manganui-O-te-Ao river	Pete Haakman
Tuesday 15 February	Fly Tying Workshop – Cicada	Gordon
Monday 28 February	Club night – Ross Gigg from Feather Merchants TBC	Malcolm
March dates TBC	McWilliams Shield – Hutt River	Gordon
Monday 28 March	Club Night – CEO Phil Teal Wellington Fish & Game	Malcolm

At this month's club meeting is on Monday 24 January will be held at the Otaihangā Domain where there will be a B.B.Q. so make sure you bring along your family for a fun evening starting at 5:00 pm

Presidents report

First, I would like to wish all our members the very best for 2022 and I trust that you and your family enjoyed a great Christmas break and managed to spend some time on the water with rod in-hand.

Just prior to the Christmas break members of both our club and members from the Horowhenua Anglers club enjoy the opportunity to spend time at the newly established Winstones Fish-out Lake in Otaki, it was great to see a number of young prospective anglers enjoying hooking a Rainbow trout.



Two of the young participants from the mornings session

Sadly, after lunch the weather turned to drizzle raining which did deter a few people away, when I went down to lock the gates, I did meet Zac and Noah enjoying having the place to themselves and managing to hook a few trout. We now have an excellent facility available for future Family Kids Fishing events and an additional opportunity as a fishing venue, later in this newsletter Leigh provides an update on the Kapiti Women on The Fly that was held on the Saturday morning.

This year will be a very interesting year for Fish and Game New Zealand as they review and implement the proposed Governments changes to how the organisation is structured, I have received very positive comments on the Acting Chief Executive Di Taylor who has the challenge of steering the organisation through the change process. Over the coming months we should learn more about the recommendations on any proposed changes, I will keep you updated with the progress.

We have our first Committee meeting on Tuesday 1 February which is being held at the Waikanae Boating Club and as a member of our club you are welcome to attend the meeting, I would be keen to hear from any member who has any ideas on any perspective Guest Speakers or possible club trips.



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.



Fly Pattern of the Month – The Cicada

Cicada



There are more than a dozen species of Cicada in the North Island with its own “song,” they spend different periods underground as nymphs. Numerous different species can hatch at the same time creating a massive sources of food for summer trout. Every angler should carry a few Cicada patterns of different sizes, they can draw trout to the surface through the summer months even when none can be heard. It’s the male Cicada that makes most of the noise in trying to attract the female Cicada.

<i>Hook:</i>	TMC 2302 sizes 6 to 10
<i>Thread:</i>	Black
<i>Underbody:</i>	Synthetic dubbing or clipped Deer Hair
<i>Body:</i>	Green foam
<i>Wing:</i>	Fly wing or White Poly-yarn or Calf -tail
<i>Thorax:</i>	Clipped deer hair of foam



Please note that if the next fly-tying meeting is held at the Waikanae Boating Club at 7.30pm **Tuesday 15 February 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



This community, which now extends from Kapiti, Manawatu, Wellington, and Taupo, has held three recent events.

1 – Fish Out morning at the Otaki Lakes

Sarah reconnected with trout fishing after a long break and showed she hasn't forgotten anything. Pip now has her first license and fly line. Ruth showed the experience from recent Women on The Fly events and club trips is paying off. Denyse tried fishing for the first time. Me, I learned about how not to strike a dry fly

The future of female fly fishing was represented by Kras's two daughters and their friends. They showed lots of patience and were rewarded with a trout.

2 - Trip to Turangi

Ruth, Leigh, and Pip spent four fun days exploring the Tongariro, Hinemaiaia, Waitahanui and Tauranga-Taupo rivers. We benefitted greatly by teaming up with Cherry Twaddle of Taupo Fishing Club for two of those days.

I can't yet report that there is a lot of catching going on, but Cherry did show us how to land a 6lb brown while Euro nymphing on the Waitahanui. And I learned the same lesson, how not to strike on a dry fly! 😞

3 - Ohau River - Spotting trout and summer fishing tips

We met at the Kimberley Reserve where Gordon and Michael shared their knowledge on summer rigs, reading the water and spotting fish. Ruth and I then attempted to catch the two trout sitting in a small pool - under overhanging trees and in the face of a gusty downstream breeze.

Lessons from the session: If your fishing buddy ever says “Yes, Now, Lift, or Strike,” to act immediately regardless of what you can see. 😞 Secondly, more casting practice is needed to avoid wasting time, effort, and flies! Thanks again to Gordon and Michael.

Kapiti Women on The Fly is now on www.facebook.com/WomenontheFlyKapiti, www.instagram.com/kapitiwomenonthefly/ and at www.kapitiflyfishing.org/kapitiwomenonthefly

In 2022, we are planning regular events and trips with the goal of building confidence, learning new skills, and creating friendships. If you have a wife, partner, mother, sister, daughter or boss who curious about fly fishing, please bring them along to a club meeting or contact me at leigh@leighjohnsonnz.com.

Take a Kid Fishing by Gregory du Bern

Tongariro Trout Centre

On a gloriously sunny day this week in January '22 I took my grandson, Gene, aged 8, up to Turangi to the Tongariro Trout Centre. Gene was staying with us for a summer break at Paraparaumu Beach. Gene is a very keen young fisherperson, and we went out fishing together on the Rangitikei River at Mangawaka on the way down from where he lives in Tauranga and where we camped for the night.

He owns a new spinning rod from Christmas and was wanting to catch his first trout on it. He has some very realistic soft plastic fish to use and despite Grandad casting it out to the far shore, no trout where were either at home or interested in eating his lure.

He wanted to see what fly fishing was about, so I took him out for a couple of hours one morning on the Waikanae River before the swimmers and dogs showed up. The river was low and clear and very sunny, so it was great for trout spotting. However, we did not see one single trout, big or small, all morning. Gene was disappointed but hid it very well, saying it was nice to be out even if we didn't catch a fish. A promising trait in one so young for a potential future angler.

As he was missing his parents, we agreed to take him home the next day and as a sweetener, I promised to take him to the Tongariro Trout Centre, where they hold daily fish-out sessions for kids to catch their first trout on a fly. He was VERY excited about that and talked about it incessantly the day of the visit.

After what seemed like an awfully long time driving, we got to the Trout Centre at Turangi. We met his parents in the car park, as the handover rendezvous place, and after a brief reunion, he was off down the path waving his ticket (I had purchased him tickets on-line the day before \$5 for kids and \$12 for grandad).

I managed to catch up with him and we raced through the aquarium to the kid's fish-out pond. He was second in line to catch a fish. We watched other kids catching and playing their fish and soon it was Gene's turn with one of the anglers helping the children.

Being hot and sunny, the trout didn't seem too interested in the fly being offered, so after a few fly changes, Gene was into his first fish. This proved to be quite small so, Paul, the teaching angler said he could catch another bigger one. This was met with a loud YES! with a fist pump from Gene. This time he landed a bigger specimen, much to his excitement.

After delivering 'The last rights' to his catch he proudly posed for pictures by Mum and Dad and carried his catch up to the office above the pond to have his catch measured and weighed. He also got a certificate filled out with his name, date and catch details to take home. Then they even offered to cook his catch for him! So, we wandered round the hatchery and Tongariro River walk while they did this. Gene carried his cooked catch back to the car where a pre-arranged chilly bin was waiting for the meal.

I have reliable reports from Dad, the next day, that dinner was delicious, and that Gene was a VERY happy boy.



Reading Water – Every rock creates five seams by Domenick Swentosky



All good trout rivers are full of rocks. Bankside and midstream, big ones and small ones — rocks are everywhere. Unless the bottom is gravel or sand for long stretches, the composition of the riverbed is a series of boulders and stones scattered in various sizes. Trout thrive in these places because rocks create structure and current seams. That structure offers protection, while the seams provide feeding lanes. And to the fisherman, those lanes are everything.

Downstream of every rock are three obvious seams: the left seam, right seam, and the slower seam in the middle. That part is easy. But the most productive seams are more hidden, and many anglers seem to miss them altogether. These are the two merger seams, where each fast seam meets the slower part in the middle. And if I had to pick just one target area, day after day and season after season, I would surely choose the merger seams.

Merging

Anywhere faster water meets slower water is a merger point. The old adage that foam is home applies here, as merger seams certainly are the collecting point for those bubble lines. But only a small percentage of merger seams form bubbles, and the attentive angler finds merger seams behind literally every rock.

The merger seams behind every rock are easy to find. Look for the three main seams: fast left, fast right, and slow centre. Now find where the slow water meets the fast water and treat those two strips of water as their own seams. These are the mergers.

Most often, merger seams are narrow strips, from just a few inches wide to twelve inches or better. Sometimes these lanes are ten or twenty feet in length and easy to follow, and other times the merger is very short — just a foot or two — before it blends in with the neighbouring seam or is overtaken by the next lane. But the mergers are there, and trout know it. Fish sit with their bellies on the bottom of these seams, because they have the best of everything — softer water to sit in, and food drifting by. Often, that food is concentrated in a skinny seam and drifting directly to the waiting trout.

Precision Targeting

Anglers of all types quickly understand that accuracy is imperative if any consistent success is to follow. So, most beginners develop the necessary skills to place the fly in an area. But the next-level angler continues to refine that accuracy until true precision is achieved. The first goal is to fish all three main seams that are downstream of a rock (left, right and centre). And a step beyond that is to target the merger seams. That's hard, because the fly and tippet must cooperate enough to hold a narrow strip of water without drifting into the neighbouring seam, fast or slow (assuming the goal is a dead drift).

Such skill comes with time and persistence. But the payoff can be extraordinary. Suddenly, a pocket that produced nothing with an area-approach can turn up a handful of fish with a tediously targeted multi-seam approach — especially when focusing on the mergers.

Pocket Water Advantages

An abundance of rocks combined with a high gradient creates a fisherman's favourite — pocket water. And whether I'm fishing dry flies, nymphs, or streamers, I'll choose the broken pocket water every time I'm given the chance.

With endless seams and oxygenated water, boulder strewn runs are the food factories of a river. Add in the extra cover and the fact that many anglers avoid the challenge of such places, and pocket water is the perfect chance to catch a pile of trout.

Mixed into every stretch of pocket water are countless lanes that mix and blend with each other. And downstream of every rock are five seams — not just three. Fish the mergers. Find the trout.

Fish hard, friends.

The Sunday Essay: A voice for the river by Jillian Sullivan, original illustrations by Marcus Watson

Central Otago's Manuherehia River is dying, do enough people care?

I wake before dawn thinking of the river.

Have I done enough?

This morning I make my submission to Judge Borthwick at the Environment Court. I want to bring her the Manuherehia, in all its wildness and betrayal, in its ripple and sing and silted, algae shallows. My words are printed out, three copies, and there's a USB key with the slide presentation. But will the Manuherehia become real to the judge.

I go out to the cold dining room, open my computer, and begin again. I don't have the smell of the river. I don't have enough senses. Facts and events, but not the river. I type, cut, and paste, print everything out again, adjust the slides. Run out the door to the car, almost late.

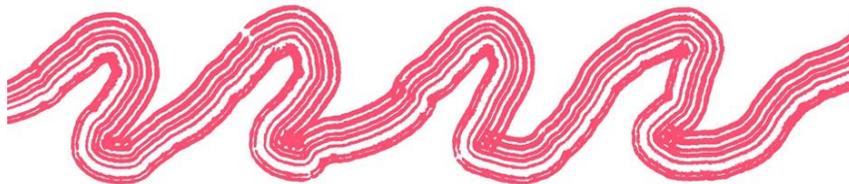
Security men in front of the court room search our bags. Then the x-ray machine probes them. “Because the judge is in situ,” one of the guards says. Outside the hills are gold, the poplars blazing yellow, the sky blue.

At the Lindis River hearing, to set a minimum flow, the court was full of irrigators, their lawyers and consultants, regional councillors and their scientists and lawyers. For the Manuherekia River hearing, would my neighbouring landowners be there? Would I have to present my argument to give more water to the river in front of those who let me ramble across their hills, who stack wood beside me at community fundraising events, who depend on water for their livelihood, as I do not?

But the court is almost empty for the environmentalists to present.

My hand on the bible. “Do you swear by almighty God that the evidence you’re about to give is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

I do.



The story of what humans have done to the Manuherekia begins in the 1860s.

Otago Witness, 25 February 1865:

“Since my last, nothing much of importance has transpired here, if I except the completion of the two races to German Gully...perhaps the finest work of the kind in the province...It commences at the foot of the Hawkdun Ranges, and after running some twenty miles, it reaches the workings immediately above the township. From thence to German Gully is a distance of about three miles, and in this length a work of great magnitude and expense has just been completed.”

These works of “great magnitude and expense”, finely built races over much of Central Otago, used the power of the rivers and tributaries, especially the Manuherekia River, for sluicing the goldfields. In time, those mining permits for water became irrigation permits. There was no knowledge in those days of how depleting the river flow affected the ecological systems of the river. Now, the new national Fresh Water Management Act states the first priority for water management must be given to the river – Te Mana O Te Wai – to the life force of the river.

The Goldfields Act 1862 established the priority system for water rights, based on “superiority of right” determined by priority of occupation (by white colonial settlers).

When mining became less profitable in the 1920s, the Public Works Department acquired the mining rights and coordinated the development of community irrigation schemes, including the building of Falls Dam as an unemployment relief project. With government restructuring, by 1989 all the major Central Otago irrigation schemes were sold to local farmer cooperatives and corporations for either nothing or \$1.00.

Regional Councils came into being with the Resource Management Act (RMA) of 1991. “Once the government set up the act, everyone taking water from anywhere had to have a resource consent,” says Marian Hobbs, former minister for the environment, former recent chair and now council member of the Otago Regional Council (ORC). “Central Otago people argued they had goldminers’ rights to take as much water as they wanted. A special exemption was granted in the RMA to the Central Otago farmers to have 30 years of unconsented water rights. Those 30 years end this year.” On October 1, to be precise.

Thirty years for the ORC to monitor the river, measure the river, study the effects of human use on the river, and 30 years for the farmers to transition from farming with permits that over allocate the river, to farming under a consent that takes the environment into consideration.

Only this did not happen.

Now the council must set a minimum flow for the river before expiring permits can be reissued as long-term consents. And because the ORC didn’t do the required science over the last 30 years, a plan change is before the Environment Court. Plan Change 7 (PC7) is how the deemed permits (mining privileges) change to resource consents. The new consents will be enacted under the new Land and Water Regional Plan (LWRP), which is currently being written, to be notified by 2023. The plan change also establishes a requirement for short duration water consents (no more than six years), until the Land and Water Plan, giving priority to sustainable freshwater management, is operative.

My photo of the river above Falls Dam is on the big screen at the Environment Court. The water stupendous in its froth and power and clarity, the surge of it over the boulders. I remember those hours and days of walking the river; climbing out of bed at dawn to pull on dry socks and wet boots, driving to the river, sliding into the water, a whole day ahead to place one foot safely after another. Nine days of walking the Manuherekia, from its source in the mountains to the confluence with the Clutha/Mata-Au, repeating sections of the river at a low flow, as well as walking much of the tributaries Ida Burn, Rocks Creek and Dunstan Creek.

So that I could stand like this, telling the truth as I saw it.

“For the first few hours of walking,” I say to the court, “the river accompanies us with its tumbling and rushing in long stretches of ripples. The air is mineral scented from the wet rocks and water sparks. The rocks are slabby sandstone and rounded river boulders. On the banks: tussock, briar rose, thistle, bugloss, woolly mullein, and rushes. In the warm air their fragrance rises.”

How does the way the Manuherekia is used compare with other regions in New Zealand? According to the Skelton Report, commissioned by the Ministry for the Environment, “it is estimated that 75% of the available flow in the Manuherekia River is taken for irrigation and stock water. This compares with about 25% in other regions of New Zealand.”

Says Hobbs: “For years ORC decided that Otago was exceptional and outside the National Policies and Standards set for water and air. The ORC of that time, under Graeme Martin, pursued effects-based management of resources rather than setting rules. But they did not monitor those effects. They didn’t report who was degrading the rivers. Ngāi Tahu were never included in this, never talked with or consulted.”

“It’s a big failure that ORC and deemed permit holders have not dealt with the issue of the expiry of deemed permits despite three decades to do so,” says another recent ORC councillor, Alexa Forbes. “I understand that people who use water from the rivers have literally banked on that water and have invested heavily in ways of being efficient with water use. But the ORC and the people of Otago need to work together to deliver the government directions which are designed to do what we have collectively failed to do – protect and preserve the health of our waterways.”

What the ORC did do, instead of helping farmers plan for the coming new water regulations, was encourage them to invest in high-cost irrigation schemes, promising if they did, the ORC would let them keep their water rights at the same level.

“The irrigation development we undertook was put in with confidence that in 2021...we would be successful in securing our existing water,” an irrigator submitted to the court.

“Since 2008 ORC have assured us that as long as we used water efficiently, we could expect to have our deemed permits replaced by RMA water consents,” another irrigator writes. “It’s only in the past three or four years that ORC have gone back on their word.”

The costs of the irrigation schemes (sometimes in their millions), now lead to stress and despair, “a huge weight of hopelessness” and sleepless nights about the ability to repay debt. Its sobering reading the submissions for the stress on individual farmers. Yet the lack of understanding of the natural world’s needs is bewildering:

“Farmers have managed their irrigation for more than 100 years with very little trouble. It is not broken – what are we fixing??”

“Irrigated land in our area currently sells for between \$ 15,000 – \$20,000/ha compared to dry land properties which sell for \$2,000 – \$8,000/ha.”

“If you want to swim,” writes one submitter to the ORC consultation on the Manuherekiā, “go to the pool.”

The last time I stood up to give a public talk about walking the length of the Manuherekiā, a woman in the middle row began to cry, and came up to me afterwards sobbing and angry. I thought my words had somehow touched her with the sacredness of the river and reached out to hug her.

“Do you think it’s all our fault,” she said, “that the river is ruined? I’m an irrigator. Are you blaming us?”

I didn’t know what to say. I understood where her tears were coming from: the finance sheets, the interest bills, the pivot irrigators in the paddock, the grass that needed water, everything a construct on a society that encouraged them to do that very thing. Progress, it’s called. Development. But I was talking for the river, not against the river users.

“For generations,” the Kāi Tahu ki Otago Natural Resource Management Plan 2005 states, “our elders struggled for recognition of their values and beliefs in respect of the interconnectedness of people, their actions and the health of the environment.”

“The prevailing resource management paradigm in Otago,” Ngā Rūnanga states in their submission to the Environment Court, “is predicated on water being regarded as freely available for use and as a commodity, rather than being valued in its own right and being made

available for the instream needs of waterbodies. This commoditisation and consumption paradigm, and the desire for this to continue to prevail over other values, has been apparent from the evidence and legal submissions of a number of parties.”

“I expected to get consents for longer than six years,” an irrigator submits to the court. “I didn’t ever think that ORC would deny us less water than we’d already been using.”

We are many voices.

It’s not so much who’s accountable, but what can be done now? How can people get through this?



“I have seen the river at its beginnings,” I tell the judge. “At the tributaries falling silver from the mountains.”

“Where do you think we should go?” the judge asks me, “so that we can see the river.”

I tell her how beautiful it is in the higher reaches, beyond the Loop Road Bridge at St Bathans.

I was filmed there in late summer by members of the organisation Choose Clean Water. We stood on a rock jutting into the river’s flow, so that as we spoke about the river, it rippled and curved into a wave beside our feet.

“The forest, waters, the life supported by them, together with natural phenomena such as the mist, wind and rocks, possess a mauri or life force,” write Kāi Tahu ki Otago.

We feel that.

When we finish talking, the young woman who’d interviewed me says, shall we swim? We lay down our clothes and lower ourselves into the deep flow. Blue skies, tussock covered hills, and river. No need for words anymore. Just full attention to the sensation of coolness and force.

I greet you, river.

I know you, river.

“The environment is alive,” writes Richard Powers in his book *The Overstory*. “A fluid, changing web of purposeful lives dependent on each other.”

“None of this is easy,” the Environment Court judge says. “Holding the whole of the environment and the community together. It’s extraordinarily difficult.”

Another slide for the court. The river sluggish, not even the depth of my boots.

“Today,” I read, “when we walk the Manuherekia at a one cumec flow, less than half the flow of the last walk, the wonder has gone. There is no magic about the next corner or the next ripple

pulling at our legs. When we come to the Galloway intake, two thirds of the already depleted river has been shunted off to the side by bulldozed banks for the irrigation intake. We know it is two thirds, because the hydrologist who is waist deep measuring cross sections of the channel, tells us. Over to the right, the main stem of the Manuherekia limps on. It is a stream I step across in two steps. (All the consent asks of the irrigation company is that a river 15cm deep and 30 cm wide is left for the public's recreation.)”

When I read submissions saying society needs us to keep using the river to this low level, I feel despair. I think of how this planet we live on is in such a precarious state young people protest for the right to live beyond the next 20 years. I try to understand how people frame stories to themselves in such a way it justifies what's destructive for the natural world:

- because we've done this for a hundred years,
- because we've done this for generations,
- because we were told that we could,
- because we believed we had the right ...
- And also, because we believe we help, because we love our families and want to give to them, because we love our land and want to care for it the best we know how, because we are doing our best and have tried to do our best ...

That narrative too. It comes from the heart and is authentic.

And still the river ebbs silted and shallow. And still the filamentous algae coats the rocks and pebbles, and still the temperature rises, and still the small living creatures, whose place in all of this we do not understand, still they gasp and are smothered.

It's not a change in systems that's needed but a change in the paradigm of the way we view and practice agriculture. Not the “commoditisation and consumption paradigm” as the Ngā Rūnanga submission puts it, but one that honours the “spiritual, cultural and physical importance of maintaining or restoring the mauri of land and waterbodies.”

The person now chairing the ORC through the new freshwater regime is beef and sheep farmer Andrew Noone.

“Challenging conversations with our communities are required as the status quo is no longer acceptable,” he says. “These conversations need to be inclusive, in good faith and future focused.”

What could this future look like?

“We no longer can rely on key competencies and commodities that have built the agricultural industry,” writes Helen France, in her [final report as Kellogg Scholar 2020](#). “Growing alternative proteins for the Agri-industry in New Zealand,” she said, “could be one of the many opportunities to grow whilst maintaining environmental standards and increasing social and cultural acceptance.” (Plant-based crops use less water and inputs and do not harm animals.)”

“I don’t want them to lose their land,” ORC councillor Hobbs says of the irrigators. “I want them to use their land differently. Grow different crops. If I were a farming leader, I’d say this is what we can’t do, this is what we could do. There are so many exciting things.”

High value crops the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is looking at to fill or augment the space of animal agriculture in New Zealand: alfalfa, amaranth, peas, millet, hemp, barley, oats, potato, walnut, wheat.

A crop that shows significant potential, MPI writes, is alfalfa. Alfalfa (lucerne) is grown all over Central Otago. It is a deep-rooted crop that does not need irrigation, and during any bike ride in summer the air is sweet with the perfume of its purple flowers. The essential amino acid profile of alfalfa is very similar to that of soy, hence the excitement about the possibilities. Lucerne latte anyone?

But we don’t much hear anyone talking about the benefits of the industries that could supersede intensive animal agriculture and protect farmers with reduced irrigation. We don’t hear it from Federated Farmers. We don’t hear it from protesting farmers. We certainly don’t hear it from the Central Otago mayor, or some of the regional councillors.

An economic assessment report from our district council was touted by the mayor as saying restoring the health of the Manuharekia River would cost the community millions of dollars in lost earnings. Yet he failed to consider the fact that farmers could transition away from practices with high irrigation needs to new crops that are more environmentally sustainable, even though the report clearly signals this.

It is this distressing silence from our rural leaders on the possibilities ahead, combined with the backlash against new freshwater requirements, that appals.

Those who love the river stand up for the river – against the power of councils, lobbyists, businesspeople, and irrigators.

Standing up for the river has a cost to us as well.

The cost of being despised in your own rural community.

The cost of being threatened with a defamation suit by the deputy chairman of the regional council for calling the councillors out on inaction.

The cost of being labelled extremists in the media by some regional councillors and others.

The emotional cost of sadness and despair when you see the river struggling.

The alienation that results for calling out what needs to be called out.

But what hope have we got for the world if we don’t begin to live within ecological boundaries?

Up there, looking towards the mountains, you can understand, however briefly, the great cycle of life; of rain and gurgling tributaries, of boulders and shingle, the power of wind over all this, the clouds and how things fall, up in the far reaches, where humans have not yet bent their will over the land. Where the water runs as pure and clear as it was meant to, mineral rich and crystalline.

I don't know if the Otago Regional Council will finally stand up for the river. I don't know if the Environment Court judge will grant respite for the river with Plan Change 7. Will they all take that step, not just into improvement but into a new paradigm of thinking: nature first, then we all thrive.

One Sunday we clamber down again to the river beyond the Loop Road Bridge. The water is bronze coloured, running noisy and strong, burbling and clattering. I pick my way along the rocks next to the water's flow. Mostly greywacke rocks, from the mountains, but now and then there are sarsen rocks, as tall and wide as hips, cream, bronze, and satiny pink. To glide a hand over one is to feel the fineness of burnished crystal from 60 million years of compression and addition. Sun, rain, ice and the inexorable grinding process of surge and disruption. In the river, the boulders shine like gold.

A Brown trout quirk by John Juracek



For the past several seasons I've been spending most of my fishing time pursuing brown trout. Free-rising brown trout. While so engaged, I've been reminded countless times of a feeding quirk particular to this species.

It's this: Brown trout react to food according to their own whims and fancy, completely independent of its presence and abundance. Surround them with a good hatch, spinner fall, or stonefly flight, and brown trout might feed readily, might feed haphazardly, or maybe not at all. Give them a sparse hatch and it's possible for every brown in the river to be on the fin, taking anything that drifts nearby. You just never know.

Other trout species don't act like this. Rainbows, and brook trout—they both exhibit feeding patterns that pretty much correlate directly with the availability of food. When food's plentiful they can be counted on to eat it and eat it well. When food's sporadic, so too is their feeding. But not the brown trout. They feed according to their own schedule. (A Henry's Fork rainbow can be fickle like this too, but still fails to rank in the same class as a brown.)

What implications does this behaviour have for fishing? For one, it suggests that patience is often going to be a key to success. Don't give up too soon if fish aren't responding early in a hatch. Brown trout can take what feels like forever to come on to a hatch. Even then, they

frequently give the impression that rising is something of a bother, practically more trouble than it's worth (uh, easily acquired, abundant food? Who cares?)

This quirk of feeding also means it's important not to pass judgment too quickly about your choice of fly or its presentation. Just because a rising fish fails to take your first cast (or fourth, tenth, even thirtieth) doesn't mean anything is wrong. Your fly may very well be right, your presentations perfect. Doesn't matter. Brown trout rise when they're good and ready.

Success then, at least for me, usually depends on figuring out the feeding rhythm of a given fish. Brown will often rise multiple times in succession and then go down for a period of time. This holds especially true for the largest specimens. Observing how many rises occur in each go-round, the interval between those rises, and the length of time the fish goes down for will help you plan your casting. Naturally, you want your fly covering the fish at the most opportune time. And, stating the obvious, the execution of other elements of your presentation must be done well too.

I know that this sort of planning and fishing is not for everyone. That's okay. But if you're drawn to brown trout like I am, particularly *free-rising* brown trout, paying attention to their feeding behaviour is more than just an interesting sidelight. It's essential to their capture.

Editor's note: there are a number of very good books focused on Brown trout and their behaviour, three that I have read and refer to frequently are as follows: What trout want by Bob Wyatt, Feeding Time by Jason Randall, and The Complete Brown Trout by Cecil E. Heacox.

Changes bolster Waikanae Reserve by David Haxton



Cyclists are being asked not to use a link track through the Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve as new environmental protection measures are introduced.

The new measures, which include dogs on leads and horse-riding restrictions, were created after a review by the Department of Conservation to further protect the estuarine environment.

DoC community ranger Steve Bielby said the department had reviewed how different visitor activities impacted the scientific reserve and how they fitted with existing reserve bylaws. Key areas highlighted by the review are:

- Vehicles are frequently in bird nesting areas and elsewhere along the beach, where the boundaries of the scientific reserve and the Kāpiti Marine Reserve meet. New signs will make it clear only foot human traffic is permitted along the beach in the scientific reserve.
- The link track between Manly Street and Otaihanga isn't built to accommodate growing numbers and speeds of cyclists, which pose an increasing safety issue. Cyclists are now asked to take the Kāpiti Coast District Council cycle path around the scientific reserve.
- Horse riders are similarly asked to take bridlepaths outside the scientific reserve, apart from being allowed to use the beach access track through the dunes from Tutere Street carpark to the public beach outside the reserve.
- Dogs will only be permitted in the scientific reserve on leads, and only on the main track from Manly St to Otaihanga, and on the beach access track through the dunes from Tutere St carpark to the public beach outside the reserve.

"We're pleased so many people enjoy the scientific reserve, however it is important to remember this isn't a recreation reserve and there are many other opportunities for recreation in the area," Bielby said. "We really need the community to support the scientific reserve, or we risk losing what makes it special."

The estuary was "one of the most important estuarine environments in the lower North Island", a DoC statement said. "It's a nesting and roosting ground for both resident and migratory birds with over 60 species visiting. It adjoins the Kāpiti Marine Reserve and is part of an important 'mountains to sea' progression from the Tararua Range to Kāpiti Island."

The scientific reserve was "created in 1987 through the efforts of Waikanae resident Sir Charles Fleming to safeguard the estuary from increasing pressures from human activities."

Care Group chair Robin Gunston said Sir Charles could "see the impact the growing community was having on the estuary and sought to manage those by providing a refuge for biodiversity."

"The care group spends many thousands of hours in the estuary protecting bird-nesting areas, managing pests, and restoring eco-sourced native plants grown in our own nursery."

"But we increasingly need the community's help, both to support the care group's work and to reduce impacts caused by reserve users."

The arrangements will be seen by reserve users in new signs, on DoC's website and are included in a letter drop to the surrounding community. The signs include an acknowledgment of Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai as mana whenua and their support for protection of the estuary.

The arrangements for the scientific reserve do not affect Kāpiti Coast District Council tracks on the north bank of the Waikanae River and on the south bank from the Otaihanga Boating Club.

Meanwhile, Chris Turver, a foundation member of the Friends of the Waikanae River, said DoC "has no right to take these actions because an Official Information Act request has disclosed that it is not operating under a management plan approved by the minister."

But Bielby countered, "As for most DoC reserves nationally, there is no formal management plan in place for Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve and no requirement in the Reserves Act to have one."

"DoC is pleased to work closely with the Waikanae Estuary Care Group including to implement a formal Ecological Restoration Plan, and also with our Waikanae ki Uta ki Tai partners Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai, Kapiti Coast District Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council to restore and revitalise the wai ora (health) of the wider Waikanae catchment."

Turver noted the reserve was cited as "one of the most important estuarine environments in the lower North Island" yet was only ranked 1336 out of 1375 in regard to DoC's reserves' national conservation and environmental values.

Bielby said, "The Waikanae Estuary has indeed been formally assessed as the second most important estuarine environment in the Lower North Island after the Manawatu estuary." "This assessment supported the inclusion of the estuary in DoC's list of priority ecological management units."

The advantages of Working Upstream by Domenick



When the dead drift took over as a popular approach to fly fishing, the path of navigation through trout streams began to change. While early fly rod tactics focused on swinging wet flies, modern fly-fishing styles to present dry flies, nymphs and often streamers from downstream to upstream, with drifts that attempt a simulation of what real trout foods do in the water.

For the majority of our tactics, fishing upstream is the best way to present the flies. And sometimes it's the only way to get the preferred drift.

So too, working upstream allows for stealth. The angler becomes the hunter. With a close, targeted approach to smaller zones, we get great drifts in rhythm, one at a time.

Spook less trout and catch more

I grew up casting spinning rigs on small streams no wider than a two-lane highway. There were plentiful undercuts and fallen logs at every turn. As these freestone streams carved through the

mountains, some side channels dried up. Others stole the main flow from their sisters and grew into the main channel after a season of floodwaters and recessions.

I credit my uncle for teaching me all that is now ingrained within me about trout fishing. We waded upstream through creeks and streams — not because it was easiest, but because it was the best approach. Now, regardless of a river's size, these principles remain the same.

"Don't wade above them. The trout will see you," I was told. And early on, I understood that a trout faces upstream, or always into the current. By processing that fact, I was stunned by how close I could approach a trout. As long as I remained behind the fish and didn't push waves, they didn't spook — even when highlighted by the shining sun.

This is truly the guiding principle for trout fishing: A scared trout never eats.

So, an angler's success always starts with this primary tenet: Don't spook 'em.

Because trout are facing upstream, it's pretty hard to argue against the logic of approaching from behind. Yes, trout have a wide blind spot, similar to you and me. And although they can't see nearly as far ahead as we do up here in the atmosphere, they're still more sensitive to what is ahead than what is behind.

Of course, working downstream toward the trout **can** work. But it requires more distance from the fish. And then, the approach becomes less accurate, less targeted, and less effective. Longer casts require more work and more false casting. And those inefficiencies rob us of good fishing.

Dead drift?

In large part, what the trout eats drifts **with** the current and not against it. Bugs and crustaceans hold one current seam, and they don't swim across the flow with much aptitude. What the trout eats is most often small and weak of ability to swim far or fast, relative to the size of the trout and the river. Even the strongest swimmers of the bug family generally bumble along with the current, waiting to find the next rock and hoping not to be eaten. (Okay, they don't hope.)

Likewise, baitfish do a lot less darting around than most anglers seem to imagine. They spend their day holding in an area and perhaps relocating a few feet with glides and drifts. Surely, when threatened, a baitfish swims hard and fast away from the threat. But even then, a baitfish uses the current to their advantage, escaping with the flow (head pointed with the current) rather than fighting against the current. Think about it.

Now, consider the dead drift. The term is thrown around too generally, these days. Because there's drifting — mostly going with the current. And then there's dead drifting — going along with the current perfectly, just as something dead would make progress downstream. Good dead drifts don't cross seams. Instead, they hold one lane. Watch an autumn leaf take a trip on the river's surface someday. Now that's a great dead drift.

Old Guys and Idiots

Yeah, it's a little harsh. And it's really unfair. But it was the reply from my friend, Jeff, as we stood on a sunny bridge and stared downstream at the backside of another angler. He was wading downstream, in low, clear water, fishing something on a swing that he was casting at a forty-five.

As Jeff had passed him on route to meet me at the bridge, they'd exchanged hellos, and Jeff had asked the stranger what he was fishing.

"Just dead drifting my nymphs," was the reply.

"Jeff," I said, watching the futility of the angler as he spooked every trout within a hundred feet and dragged his flies unnaturally, *"what kind of people do this?"*

Without hesitation, and without breaking his gaze of curiosity and pity for the fisherman, Jeff replied, *"Old guys and idiots Dom."*

Being now closer to old than young, I suppose, I might take umbrage to that statement. But it's hard to offend me, especially if there's a lot of truth involved.

Fishing, and fly fishing in particular, is a sport that most seem to learn by watching others. There's a rich tradition of swinging wet flies in fly fishing. And it works — sometimes and if done with considerable nuance beyond just swinging' flies. So, I think plenty of fly anglers have watched someone swing wets, tied on whatever fly came out of the box and then started swinging it.

Of course, dries and nymphs need a dead drift more often than not, and even streamers catch more trout by imitating a natural presentation.

So, let's not say old guys, but rather . . . misguided traditionalists. And let us not say idiots but change that affront to . . . fishers who are unlearned or simple in their technical approach. (This is the twenty-first century, after all, and people are easily wounded by such challenges.)

The fact is, swinging flies downstream works within a limited range of flies and situations.

Dry flies downstream? Okay. Sometimes, with a parachute cast, it's a fair approach. Streamers on the swing? Sure. Now see if they'll eat it instead of just chasing it.

Remember, everything works sometimes.

But by and large, the bulk of good fly fishing for trout happens while working upstream — especially when the goal is a dead drift. Yes, I fully expect to be crucified by some excellent anglers who walk with the currents. But read the preceding paragraph again if you're mad at me.

Hooking and Fighting

Here's a final point, and another great argument for working upstream.

When we hook a trout on the upstream side rather than downstream, we set the hook back into the trout. On the contrary, if a fish eats downstream of our position, the best we can do is pull sideways (bankside) and hope the fly sets sideways into the trout. More often, even with our best efforts, the hook pulls away from the trout and upstream. A good hookset is simply more difficult while fishing downstream.

When the hook does find a firm grip, the downstream angler is at a remarkable disadvantage in the fight. The current is working **for** the trout instead of against it. And the angler feels the pressure not only of the fish, but also the current pushing on that fish.

There's no doubt the best place to fight a fish in the river is upstream. Good anglers who find a trout downstream of their position often run downstream to change angles on the fish. So, an upstream approach to fishing puts the angler in the best chance to land the fish from the beginning.

Do it

Work upstream through the river. Make it your default approach.

Then there are times you might deviate. I fish downstream at night a good bit. When floating, most of my casts are downstream of the boat or beside it. And there are times when I wade downstream and fish long swings with a wet fly or streamer — because that's what turns the fish on that day.

But those situations are the exception to the rule. Because great dead drifts happen by casting upstream. And because we fish cleaner and spook fewer trout by approaching from behind.

Fish hard, friends.

The double haul – questions and answers by John Juracek



I spend a lot of time teaching fly casting, and the double haul frequently arises among students as a topic of discussion and questions. Many of the questions are ones that arise time and again. So, for anglers that might be wondering about the double haul and whether it's worth incorporating into their fishing, here are some answers.

What is the Double Haul?

Simply put, it's an advanced casting technique that increases the speed of the fly line during the cast. To achieve this, the line hand literally pulls— "hauls"—on the fly line at select points in the casting stroke. The increased line speed resulting from hauling provides a variety of benefits.

Do I need to learn the Double Haul in order to catch fish?

No. You can be highly successful in many different angling realms without knowing how to double haul.

Okay, but should I learn Double Haul anyway?

Yes. It will make your fishing life much easier by broadening the situations in which you can be successful. Just don't learn too soon. It's best to develop a mechanically sound casting stroke first, taking whatever time is necessary to do so, and only then adding in the double haul.

By doing this, your ceiling as a caster elevates—a lot. Anglers who learn to haul before they possess good mechanics are more often than not doomed to casting mediocrity. It's as if learning to haul causes all other casting faults to immediately ossify, ingraining them forever, foreclosing on any potential future progress. But for anglers patient enough to learn once their fundamentals are sound, the benefits of hauling become *additive* to their casting strokes, allowing them to flourish in difficult situations they would otherwise be unable to handle.

How does the Double Haul actually work?

There are two mechanisms in play. Hauls themselves directly increase the speed of the line. Hauling also causes the rod to bend more deeply (as opposed to a cast made without a haul). This deeper bend stores more energy, and as the rod unloads this energy transfers to the line in the form of speed. Depending on exactly when during the stroke the hauls are made, the relative effect of each mechanism can vary. Suffice it to say that in most fishing situations, both elements end up playing a role in increasing the speed of the line.

How will Double Hauling help my fishing?

In numerous ways. Hauling aids in casting long distances, counteracting the effects of wind, increasing accuracy, casting large, heavy and/or wind resistant flies and, not least, hauling can relieve our rod arm of some of the burden of casting.

I often hear and read that Hauling helps with distance, wind, and large flies. But accuracy too? How does that work?

The additional line speed generated by hauling allows our rod arm to make a shorter, less effortful stroke than required for a cast without a haul (the work is divided between two hands instead of one). Shorter strokes made with less effort allow for better control over the tip of the rod—an essential key for accurate casting.

If you watch highly skilled anglers or competitive tournament casters, you'll see many of them hauling at targets only 40 - 50 feet distant. They're not hauling for distance, but rather to minimize the length of their stroke and the effort of their rod arm, knowing they'll be more accurate that way. It's akin to the increased accuracy a professional golfer achieves when chipping the ball from greenside as opposed to playing a full shot from well down the fairway.

Double Hauling can also lighten the burden on my rod arm?

Yes, in the manner I just alluded to. Hauling splits, the work of the cast between both arms. However, there's a caveat here. Enjoying this particular benefit depends a lot on your fly rod. It

can't be overly stiff. For example, many of today's fly rods—saltwater models especially—are stiff enough that many anglers (women especially, but men too) find them extremely difficult to cast *without* hauling. Their rod arms are just not strong enough nor quick enough to load the rod effectively. So, for these anglers, hauling with such a rod is less about splitting the work between arms than it is a prerequisite for making a successful cast, period.

What's the best way to learn the Double Haul?

Take a lesson from a casting instructor. A lot of things can go awry when you're learning to haul, and it's nice to have someone alongside that can fix the things that do. But if you've developed a sound casting stroke that can withstand the addition of new movements without going haywire, then books or videos are excellent resources to learn from too.



Who needs summer days or escapes to the tropics when you've got cosy days spent ice fishing on the lake? Who's in?

Last Cast by Domenick Swentosky December 31, 2021

I had a couple hours of daylight left, and I couldn't stand it anymore.

The pothole where I've found some of my biggest fish on the river was only a couple hundred yards away from the couch that I was sitting on, so I layered up and rigged up. Then I headed for the water.

Most things in fishing don't work out the way you had them planned, but I guess this short trip got pretty close.

Nothing would move to streamers, and the water was cold and getting colder. So, after a half hour of casting upstream to the left bank and another fifteen minutes of throwing downstream to the right bank, I switched to nymphs and walked down to the pothole that I'd been dreaming of.

It didn't take long, and I was surprised by a twelve-inch brown. Fair enough. We mostly don't consider this river to be all that productive in the winter, so any tug on the end of the line was a welcome feeling. Just a few minutes after the release, I was into a good high-teens fish that put a nice bend in the rod. Awesome.

The light of the last day in 2021 began to fade, and I reminisced a bit. It's been an incredible year for me, full of life lessons that I probably needed to work on for some time now.

Last April, two herniated disks in my back started pinching a nerve that travelled down my left arm. After nearly a month with each day being worse than the previous, and appointments with multiple doctors, the pain was almost unbearable. I couldn't work, fish, sleep or even enjoy time with my family. I was at an absolute low point, and I guess I needed to be that far down to clearly see what was actually important in life.

An MRI showed the doctors that surgery was my only option. And after the initial fear, I found myself relieved to be headed toward a solution.

The whole experience was really a defining moment in my life, as the reality of my human vulnerability revealed a depth in the world that I had never seen. Life after surgery was like an over-saturated photo. And each moment — each emotion — became more vivid. It opened my heart more to the love of my family and friends, and I wanted to hold on to that feeling. In the spirit of the season, I'd say that trying to see the world as I did right after surgery is my New Year's resolution.

I moved back upstream into a position just above where I'd hooked the last fish. The pothole was about four feet wide and twice as long, and I'd saved the top part for the last few casts since there's a very good chance of hanging up in the overhanging limbs. It's a tough spot ...

... It was a good cast. Just enough slack to allow the nymph to sink before the drift ... drift ... drift. Watch the line. Visualize the nymph on the bottom. Watch the line ... hesitation ... tick ... tick ... and I set the hook.

Probably my best fish since summer. Whiskey Drinker, and the last cast of 2021.

Here's to living the next year vividly, Enjoy a great 2022.

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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.

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*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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