



Kapiti Fly Fishing Club

June 2020 Newsletter

This month's front cover: this is a painting as I have run out of photos – Why don't you send me a photo that you have taken while out on a river, lake or sea somewhere?

In this month's newsletter:

- Page 2** Presidents Report
- Page 3** Fly Casting Tuition
- Page 3** Fishing the Dry Fly as a Living Insect by Al Simpson
- Page 5** Saltwater Fly Fishing within New Zealand by Gina Booyesen
- Page 9** An empty nest – by Chris Hunt
- Page 12** NZ's polluted waterways threaten our health from Newsroom
- Page 15** Warnings of trout fishing decline have been ignored by Tony Orman
- Page 17** The Twenty dollar cast by Domenick Swentosky
- Page 19** Fly Fishing Montana's Spring Shoulder by Al Simpson
- Page 22** Water issues involve both Fish and Human health by Waikanae Watcher
- Page 24** 3 Reasons you should be using Loop Knots by Colin K Breck

Club activities

At this stage, the Committee will review the On-Water trips and provide an update in next month's newsletter.

You are invited to the next KFFC Club Night on Monday 22 June – come and listen to Gina Booyesen from Kings-to-be-Found share his experiences of salt water fly fishing for King fish, have a look at the article on page 5

Meeting starts at 7:30pm looking forward to seeing you there



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

President report

Now we are in Winter, somehow, we seem to have missed Autumn, and the local fish have pretty much all moved upriver. Well, it is not all bad as we have the Taupo area on our doorstep so get out your 8lb Maxima for those Big Tongariro Rainbows and join us on our winter club trips to Turangi. As yet the exact dates have not been set as we need to finalise the accommodation options and we will email you all with the dates.

I was fishing there with Leon over Queens Birthday weekend and whilst I had some success Leon caught several beautiful Bows and all our fish were in great condition.

To maximise your fishing chances, it certainly helps to understand the basics and also be a competent caster, so we have set up the following for new members:

- Firstly, club member Ross Goodman has agreed to contact all new members and should they require any help provide advice on the basics required for trout fishing.
- Gordon Baker has also put his hand up to offer casting help for new members and a summary of this and how to contact him is included in this Newsletter. We also have a keen group of Spey casters, both single and double handed, and I am sure you will hear more of possible casting clinics coming up.

So, a great big thank you to Ross and Gordon.

A reminder that all the key contact members are shown at the end of the Newsletter and please call me as well if you want a chat.

Lastly don't forget to check out both the club Website and Facebook pages for upcoming events and be sure to be at Club night at the Turf Centre in Paraparaumu on Monday night 22nd June to hear Gian Booyesen from "Kings to be Found" give us a talk on all matters salt water fly fishing.

This will be our first club night back in the clubhouse and an interesting evening, so I hope to see you all there.

Keep warm

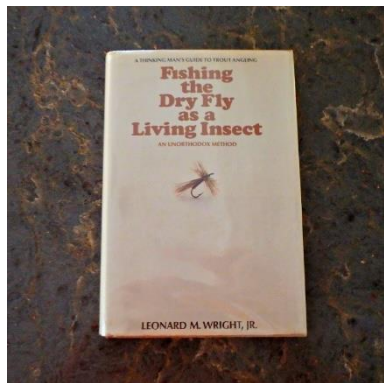
Michael

Fly Casting Tuition

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

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

Fishing the Dry Fly as a Living Insect by Al Simpson



Book Review

I think that Leonard Wright Jr. is one of the twentieth century's most overlooked fly-fishing authors. Well known to his contemporaries, his works have been "lost" over time. I found his first book, "Fishing the Dry Fly as a Living Insect" (1972), in a used bookstore in Ennis, Montana. It had a musty, old-library odour that I love, and cost \$1.00.

Wright was a freethinker who challenged many of the tenets of fly fishing, often rankling "authorities". In his day, it was dry-fly fishing dogma to present the fly with a "perfect downstream drift", that is, free of abnormal movement or drag. Yet haven't we all had the experience of movement, by accident or intention, resulting in a vigorous take by a lurking trout? Mr. Wright took this observation, and tested the hypothesis that movement imparted to a dry fly is in many circumstances superior to the classic dead drift.

Excerpts –

"Let us suppose, for illustration, that a trout has left his hiding place and is lying in a mild current, anticipating food. An object enters the upstream edge on his window and is judged to be the right size for food. The first tumbler drops, and the trout's fins begin to quiver in readiness. More

information comes in telling that this is the right *shape and colour* to be food. The second tumbler drops, and the trout starts his glide toward the surface. The object moves, indicating that it is *alive*. The last tumbler drops, and the trout's mouth opens. I feel that short rises, or last-minute refusals, are due usually to the fact that our flies fail to fulfil the third requirement and that the last tumbler in the trout's simple brain does not fall."

"After the first of June on Eastern streams and rivers, the most common situation the fly-fisher faces are the "non-hatch." A few flies may struggle to the surface at choice times of day, but there will seldom be enough of them to make fish rise regularly or create a marked preference for any specific size or pattern.

If you want to catch good trout in any numbers at this time of year, you must become a prospector rather than a hatch matcher. Under these conditions—and they usually dominate the greater part of the open season—trout must be goaded into rising to the surface. The fluttering dry fly becomes the most successful tactic."



Leonard Wright's fluttering caddis

Review

His writing style is easy to read, and reveals a bright, inquisitive mind, driven by keen observation and experimentation. One of his observations was that both hatching, and egg-laying caddis orient their movements to the water surface in an upstream direction. He then experimented with his fluttering fly pattern, presenting it to rising trout. A downstream twitch, similar to drag, usually led to refusals. But an upstream twitch usually led to strikes.

He covers a great deal more in this modest-sized book. Topics include flies of his own design, subsurface fishing, trout lies, feeding patterns, and much more. But I found the most compelling aspect was his discussion of dry-fly fishing and his repartee' with "Halford's Dry Fly Doctrine". I found this to be a great read!

If you find that you like his writing, you might enjoy reading others of the dozen books that he has written. Another that I especially enjoyed was "The Ways of Trout: When Trout Feed and Why". In the third section, he explores possible feeding triggers. He again takes a scientific approach and conducts a series of streamside studies to test a number of common and uncommon theories. I will not spoil the read by disclosing his conclusion(s), but you will likely be surprised!

Saltwater Fly Fishing within New Zealand by Gina Booyesen

There seems to be no clear reason to undertake the generally more difficult path of fly fishing as opposed to another form of fishing. The general idea, of course, remains the same, the aim being to catch fish. Fly fishing, besides using a rod, reel and line also share many wonderful attributes (some indirectly) with other forms of fishing; for example, the scenic and often breath-taking places it takes you, and meeting kind and generous people, many of whom are similarly obsessed, along the way.

Simply put, in today's fast-paced society fly fishing like other forms of fishing offers a hard-to-find sense of tranquillity. However, it is in the way in which it is done where fly fishing is vastly different from conventional methods.

- Firstly, the required ability to gracefully present the line with an almost weightless fly is unique, even poetic.
- Second, the presentation itself allures but because it is such a delicate movement it is indispensable to get much closer to one's target without alarming it.
- Third, the absence of weight such as a sinker in conventional methods is countered by using a weighted line. The weight, rather than concentrated, is spread over the length of the line and (hopefully) rhythmically orchestrated by a soft natured rod. The unfolding of this line lays open a transparent leader and accompanying imitation hoping to deceive the fish.
- Fourth, handling of the line itself necessitates skill, as it is inclined to tangle relatively easily.

So, if fly fishing, in many ways is more challenging, why do it? Well, for many, the challenge is the appeal.

Globally, New Zealand is viewed as a fisher's paradise with a pristine environment, its scenery often suited to a coffee table book. The healthy inland waterways provide an ideal home for trout - the universally accepted and sought species for a fly fisherman. Since trout's introduction in the 1850s in New Zealand, they have flourished within many waterways, rivers, and lakes. The absence of predators and an abundance of life within these waterways, allow trout to grow to substantial sizes and justifies why New Zealand is a Mecca for the fly fisher. The idea of sighting your quarry offers a visual and tactile aspect which is absent from other forms of fishing - becoming more like hunting. Indeed, fly fishing is thought to be best suited to trout.

Trout can be found feeding in a stationary position, common in rivers, or found slowly cruising in current less water. Regardless, a cast is made ahead of the trout, hoping to intercept the fish's lines of sight. In either situation, there is great anticipation as a trout, for many a fly fisher, hopefully of great proportion, inspects the imitation, making time stand still and your heart to skip a beat. But ... we are not here to discuss fly fishing for trout.

At present, there is much interest in saltwater fly fishing in New Zealand's shallow water expanses, harbours, and estuaries, and rightfully so. The conjunction of a nutrient-rich ocean surrounding the coast, and often unsullied waterways flowing towards the coast, create a healthy shallow saline environment resulting in exceptional water clarity. This accumulation of nutrients accompanies

too an abundance of life and presents incredible opportunities for the visual fly fisherman. Consequently, the vast potential New Zealand has as a saltwater fly fishery is speedily becoming known. What appealed to me specifically was realising large oceanic fish may be targeted by such a delicate form of fishing. This is something that leads anglers to concentrate on saltwater fly fishing, with many spending no time at all targeting trout.

Saltwater and freshwater fly fishing, despite both being fly fishing, are in many ways incompatible. On the surface, the saltwater environment is physically barren and openly greets wind from all directions. Nevertheless, below the surface, there is abundant life with an array of species that can be pursued with a fly rod in hand. Often, however, they are large predatory fish that would make light work of trout gear. The saltwater gear is analogous to that used for freshwater fly fishing; however as if sprinkled with steroids to combat the bigger fish, and the more corrosive environment.

Generally, though, if you are able to artificially imitate (with a fly) the food source of the targeted species, and you have the right gear, it can be pursued with a fly rod in hand. That said whether you are able to land the fish is a different question. Pelagics, such as Tuna and Trevally, with cunning, strength, aggression and speed can test your skill, experience, gear, and persistence to the limit. Even reef species such as snapper and blue cod can be targeted on the fly - all are worthy adversaries. All these species are unique in both behaviour and environment and prevalent year-round in many of New Zealand's northern harbours. Both the choice of gear and species habitat are discussed in depth in coming articles. For the fly fisherman, however, the main and desired species of interest is the yellowtail kingfish

Ocean-going fish, but especially kingfish are not comparable to trout. One cannot do kingfish an injustice describing them as one of the noblest of fish - to me at least. Their dense, overly muscular, yet sleek nature ensures anything alive in its path is short-lived. Kingfish are adapted to hunt at speed, and it is rare to observe them stationary. To the fly fisherman, they also appeal as they can be found feeding aggressively in the shallowest areas of harbours and estuaries, and there may then be pursued on foot, just as one would a nimble trout. The seeming inappropriateness of such large, aggressive, predators being present in water less than knee deep is what intrigues many, not just the spectacular visual takes, arm cramping fights and unimaginable beauty of these fish

Most commonly, fly fishermen wade intertidal zones in search of all these oceanic species. These zones are areas where crustaceans, baitfish and other juvenile fish are prevalent and forced to move by falling tides. When this occurs, the predatory fish, like kingfish wait to ambush them.

Adding another layer of interest, many predatory fish may hunt in unison with a pack or travel alongside the southern stingray, or the larger specimens are solitary fish and so patrol these areas alone. For the wading fisherman, a great part of the challenge is to locate these fish, again similar to hunting. There is ordinarily a large expanse of water in the saltwater environment with few restrictions on where the targeted fish could be. The odds, therefore, to encounter them are low. However, a strategy and tactics can be implemented to increase these odds while wading the shallow waters. More on this in a later article.

As a primer though, with kingfish, their size results in a displacement of water as they swim, sometimes giving their presence away in the form of a bow wave. Frequently bait fish shoaling, or

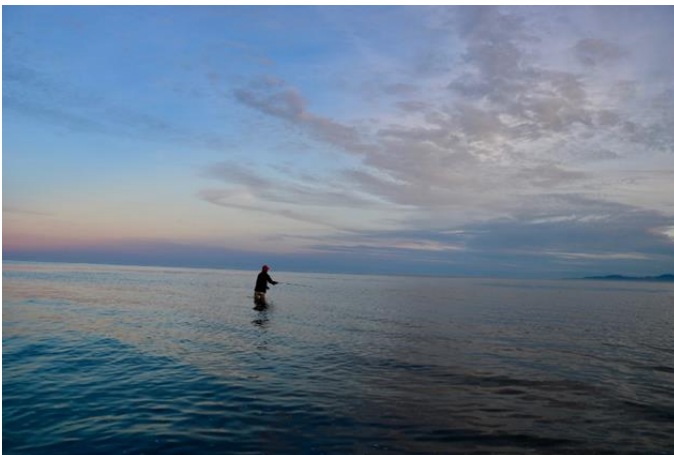
jumping, may indicate there are predators nearby - thus creating an auditory variable which in weak light is vital. The ability to identify the sound of splashes or slaps on the water from baitfish being harassed may result in your dream fish. Notwithstanding, arguably, the southern stingray is the most effective 'method' to locate kingfish. The stingray in water is a large, dark undulating disc easily spotted by the human eye. The stingray possesses electroreceptors that aid to identify prey covered by sand, who emit bioelectric fields. These electroreceptors are absent in pelagic fish, like kingfish. Resultantly, kingfish, among others, parasitically swims alongside, on top of, and sometimes briefly below the stingray as it locates the prey.

If the targeted fish are found, and one succeeds in placing an accurate cast, what follows is truly daunting. Whether it is a solitary kingfish or a large pack, one's eyes necessarily light up with excitement and trepidation as it or they charge directly towards your presented fly, regularly in competition with one another.

No matter how fast your retrieve, if your fly is desired it will be devoured and before you can finish uttering your favourite expletive, your fly line and backing will be absent from your reel. Kingfish provides a visceral and visual experience like no other; instead of skipping a beat, your heart I believe simply stops for a few seconds.

It is perhaps a mystery why one would choose to pursue a challenge like saltwater fly fishing, specifically to then release the fish at the end of it all. But to understand somewhat its appeal, it might well be seen as a pilgrimage, a mission to somewhere mystical. It then becomes apparent that it is not about catching the fish. You are on a journey and given a glimpse into another life, an ancient life as well as sharing these enraptured moments with a prized predator.

The months or even years spent in pursuit of fish result in you developing an affinity for them. And if blessed to succeed in catching it, you frequently feel not to take its life as you have dedicated so much of your own for that specific moment. Rather you find peace in watching it swim away, ready to hunt another day. I hope to encourage you to embark on this journey at some point in your own life.



A prime shot of a magical evening spent fly fishing.

The peacefulness was short-lived as moments later the stalked kingfish engulfed the presented fly only to straighten the hook.



It is a rarity for all things to align and a moment like this to arise. A truly memorable fish of mine stalked and caught in a surreal location.

I was fortunate to share this moment with good mate and photographer Blake Pringle.



A delicacy for a kingfish. An artificial imitation such as this shrimp pattern has proven its worth. A great shot by mate Kieran Blair.



Although the gear is delicate, if used correctly, some serious pressure can be applied with these modern-day instruments





A drone shot of two ray-riding kingfish by friend Tom Basset-Eason.

A parasitic relationship allowing the kingfish to capitalise on the feeding behaviour of the southern stingray.

An empty nest – by Chris Hunt



And just like that, he's gone.

I remember when Cameron sprung himself onto the world on a brutally windy Idaho day in 2002 — he was sliced from his mom's belly during a planned C-section delivery and emerged with a surly attitude and full bladder. As the doctor held him up and showed him around, he peed on the scrubs of every surgical attendant at the operating table amid a round of laughter.

He has always been a tempest, a lot like the day that welcomed him to the world. But his attitude improved from Day One. He grew into his dimples, which he uses to his advantage to this day. That smile is viral. Here's hoping his intentions are good when he puts it to use from here on out.

He spent the next 18 years steadily lowering the property values of both my house and his mom's — the boy has a knack of simply exploding once he enters a clean room. I kept up the fight for some semblance of cleanliness, but I never really succeeded. Even as he packed his belongings last week for the last time and prepared to leave for a job in a remote corner of northwest Wyoming, I was scraping up some hideous, food-based science experiment he'd let age nicely under his bed.

A few weeks ago, I replaced all the screens on my windows. Two kids with ground-level windows meant two kids with simple access to the yard without having to walk down the hall to the front door. I also replaced a sprinkler head under Cameron's bedroom window — a climb in or out likely resulted in a teenager stepping on it and crushing it.

He thinks I don't know. But I know. And, honestly, I know everything. But, as a parent, you pick your battles. And you may win some battles. But the war is not over until they choose. Until they garner the courage to try something new that does not involve us.

We have been fortunate on that end. Neither of our kids had the mindset that they would live at home much past high school, and we encouraged that. Both their mom and I were largely on our own after we matriculated through academia — returning home would have felt like defeat. We tried to instill that mindset in our kids, and encourage them to go and do, even if it meant that they chose work instead of school. At least to start.

And now, they've both gone and done.

For the last few days, I have been saying things in jest, like, "Good riddance," and "Don't the let door hit ya," as my son prepped for a new stage in his life. While I might sometimes feel like a blackjack dealer leaving the table with a clap of the hands, I've been honestly wondering how I'd feel when the four-bedroom house was empty, save for me and my old mutt, Phoebe, who lies at my feet as I work each day.

Turns out, I'm OK.

I'm OK with being alone. Now, when "lonely" (because "alone" and "lonely" are two separate things) sets in, it might be a different story. But for now, I relish the fact that his former bedroom now sits gloriously free of makeshift petri dishes and dirty laundry that, at times, appeared to stand in the corners of his room of its own volition. The windows are screened and locked. The closet is empty.

I do, though, wonder what he is doing at the oddest of times. In his new job at Grand Teton National Park, I wonder how the internet connection is holding up to his Xbox habit. I wonder if he is worked his way through the two cases of ramen noodles yet, or if the rice maker his mom left him is still working after nearly a week of use. I wonder if he is taken a look at the fly rod standing up in the corner of his room and considered putting it to use.

And I wonder, honestly, if he is lonely. If he might just need me. Just a little bit.

And then I think of the world in which he is venturing out. What might have seemed like something of a cavalier decision a few short months ago to go and work in a remote national park now seems like a pretty safe bet. He and his sister are both working, productively, in the shadow the Teton's, largely away from urban crowds, viral outbreaks and the protests over police brutality that continue in the wake of the tragic murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

As a parent, I can only express relief that, one, they are both safe, and two, they're both actually employed. Having shared conversations with both of them, I know that they are both, however, keenly plugged into the pulse of the times, and that, despite being somewhat removed from the troubles of the day, they understand what's going on in "the real world."

I'm also glad that, while he's venturing out, Cameron's not too far away — if a crisis were to occur, I could be in the park and at the door to his dorm room in less than two hours, assuming the weather and Teton Pass cooperate. As parents, this may be the most trying time, when children are no longer dependent on us for every bite of sustenance or for the roofs over their heads

And I tell myself that I'll be able to see him as much as I like — I tend to wander to that corner of the world, fly rod in hand, more often than I realize. Just this past weekend, I drove through, dropped off his bike and fed him lunch on my way to fish the Firehole in nearby Yellowstone National Park.

For clarity, Cameron has never really shared my passions, either for the outdoors or for the trout that swim in the rivers of his childhood. We took a trip a couple of years back to the wilds of northern Manitoba where we spent a week chasing pike and walleye together. Even there, he limited his fishing time, choosing instead to learn cribbage from a fellow lodge guest or converse with the girls who worked at the lodge.



But he did fish, and we did share some great time together — it was the adventure I really wanted, and kind of foisted upon him as he turned 16. And, to my delight, he brings it up often, saying he'd love to do it again. I'll take it.

When I sat down for lunch with him the other day in Jackson, he surprised me.

"They have a climbing program at the lodge," he said. "And at the end, I can climb Mt. Moran. I'm going to do it."

I did a double-take.

"Really?" I asked, trying not to sound overly pleased. My son, the video game junkie wants to learn to climb. In the Tetons? I could barely conceal my own excitement "I think that sounds like an amazing opportunity."

And, later that afternoon, as I dropped him off at the lodge, I could not help but laugh as he had to climb in through his dorm window because he had locked his keys inside. We can make sure they make it to adulthood, but how they adult ... well, that's on them.

And later that day, as I cast over wild browns and rainbows on the Firehole during an epic Blue-winged Olive hatch, I couldn't help but wonder what my son was doing in his lonely dorm room on a blustery day while I chased trout. Was he looking up at Mt. Moran and daydreaming, like I do, when I comb over gazetteer maps and search out new blue lines to explore when the time is right?

And when I got home just after dark, after a day with a lot of reflective windshield time, I walked past Cameron's room. It's clean. It's tidy. It's empty. The house itself has lost some soul.

I miss him. All the time. Maybe I am not OK. Not yet.

NZ's polluted waterways threaten our health from Newsroom

Part one profiles the work of ecologist Dr Mike Joy, a Senior Research Fellow in the Institute for Governance and Policy Studies in Wellington School of Business and Government at Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington.



Joy has been labelled 'Doctor Doom' for his pessimistic views on the state of our fresh water. "It's blatantly obvious, why don't we admit that we've completely failed and start again?" says Joy.

In this article for Newsroom, Joy outlines why he thinks we need to urgently reduce the nitrogen levels in our water.

The Covid-19 pandemic has concentrated minds on short-term human health issues and long-term economic survival ones. But there are health issues lurking in the middle ground that we should be giving as much attention.

For all the attention focused on the state of freshwater in New Zealand over the past few years, relatively little has been said about the associated health threats – we have been too distracted by our inability to swim in our favourite rivers and by the declining state of freshwater ecosystems.

The majority of our **drinking water** in New Zealand comes from groundwater (53 percent), followed by rivers and lakes (26 percent), with the rest from rainwater. Contaminant levels are on the rise in groundwater, rivers, and lakes, with nitrate levels in particular emerging as a huge red flag.

Recent research has highlighted the link between nitrates in drinking water and **multiple negative health outcomes**, in particular colorectal cancer. Evidence is also accumulating which links nitrates in drinking water with thyroid disease and neural tube defects. In particular, some **recent large studies** confirm long-term exposure to nitrate is linked to increased colon cancer risk. (The mechanism is thought to be from nitrate in water converting into the carcinogenic compound N-nitroso after ingestion.)

Colorectal cancer, encompassing both colon and rectal cancers, is the **third most prevalent** cancer and the second highest contributor to cancer deaths worldwide. Despite these high global numbers, New Zealand has some of the **highest colorectal cancer rates** in the world. Within the country, rates vary significantly, with the **highest incidences** in South Canterbury and Southland. By a staggering coincidence, these are also areas with high levels of **nitrate in aquifers**.

One critical issue for New Zealanders is that our current maximum acceptable value for nitrate in drinking water is not in any way related to colorectal cancer, thyroid disease, or neural tube defects. Rather, it is based on the **risk of “blue baby syndrome”** (infantile methaemoglobinaemia, which reduces the ability of red blood cells to release oxygen to tissues).

A Danish study that calculated the exposure rate for 2.7 million people – the biggest sample size of any study to date – showed a significantly elevated risk of cancer with drinking water nitrate levels 10 times lower than our current maximum acceptable value.

As for the actual levels of nitrate in New Zealand drinking water at a national scale, I cannot yet give them, because no one organisation is collecting the data. Drinking water suppliers are not required to routinely monitor or report on nitrate levels below 50 percent of that dangerously high maximum acceptable value.

The reason nitrate levels in drinking water are going up is that to enhance plant growth we have been doing everything we can to get nitrogen out of the atmosphere and into the soil, where it can leach into groundwater and drain into rivers and lakes. In the past 100 years, globally we have **doubled the inputs of reactive nitrogen** going into our natural environment.

We have done this by using fossil gas to create synthetic nitrogen fertiliser, industrialising a job that used to be done for us by plants. Here in New Zealand, around a third of our polluting nitrogen fertiliser comes from Taranaki natural gas, with the other two thirds imported from the Middle East.

This conversion from natural to artificial food production has scaled up significantly in New Zealand over the past three decades. Over this period, the amount of nitrogen fertiliser we add to soils has increased by almost 250 percent, to a current amount of roughly 429 million kilograms a year. The nitrate lost to the environment from livestock systems has, of course, increased in tandem, to the point where around **199 million kilograms of nitrogen a year** leaks into our waterways and aquifers.

We can measure this in our rivers and lakes, with an increased nitrate load **159 percent more** than natural levels. This leakage from intensive farming shows up with **85 percent of waterways** in pasture catchments (half of the national waterway length) now exceeding **guideline nitrate limits**. Over the past 30 years, 44 percent of monitored sites have **nitrate levels increasing** and nearly all of these sites have pasture catchments.

Groundwaters also are getting worse, with 35 percent of bores monitored nationally **deteriorating**, and it's much worse in places like Canterbury, where almost all drinking water comes from groundwater and 48 percent of monitored bores have become more polluted with nitrogen.

There is obviously a need to look at the issue of nitrate in drinking water, and in fact this is under way. The Government has announced an **inquiry** with a task force to look into the problem in New Zealand.

Separately, a research group I am part of is investigating colorectal cancer risk and nitrate contamination in New Zealand drinking water, a collaboration between Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington, the University of Otago, the University of Auckland and Loughborough University Scotland.

But any argument that we should wait for more research into the cancer implications of the nitrogen in our water is specious. It is patently obvious we urgently need to reduce nitrogen inputs into our water, not just for the sake of ecosystem health, but to reduce the butcher's bill our people pay to cancer year in and year out.

There is **growing pressure** on farming to halt synthetic nitrogen use and **evidence is accumulating** that farmers can make more profit by reducing their use of artificial fertilisers.

Many New Zealanders have recently joined me in calling for radical new approaches to food production and our entire way of living post-Covid through the **Better Futures Forum**. This forum is determined to give government the mandate to make the tough decisions needed to give us a sustainable and resilient future.

There are viable and exciting regenerative solutions where we can produce food and fibre not dependent on fossil fuels. Based on ecological principles, regenerative farming systems mimic natural ecosystems, restoring rather than degrading the land and freshwaters over time.

It is worth noting also that in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic New Zealanders are likely to become more sensitive to a wide range of safety and health issues, and may well become more discerning as to the provenance of their food – as may consumers in our major export markets.

This is our opportunity to change to a more sustainable food production model in New Zealand.

Warnings of trout fishing decline have been ignored by Tony Orman

Many trout anglers have noticed a decline in trout fishing over the last couple of decades. So did at least one Fish and Game scientist who spoke out publicly.

But their warnings have not been heeded.

Twenty years ago, Wayne McCallum, North Canterbury Fish and Game's Environment Officer, wrote in the November 2000 issue of the magazine "Southern Fishing and Boating" about lowland trout rivers and said that "on careful study, there appears to be more than a problem. Rather the evidence points to a wholesale crisis."

He said, "the crisis is demonstrated most graphically to anglers in the decline of trout densities across a mounting list of New Zealand's lowland waterways."

Wayne McCallum cited two examples, Canterbury's Selwyn River and the Horokiwi Stream, north of Wellington, a stream that was the subject of scientist Radway Allen's classic study of a "typical New Zealand trout stream." Both had undergone severe declines in trout numbers with trout becoming "non-existent". Yet in the Horokiwi from Radway Allen's observation in the year 1950, there were "70 fish per cubic 100 metres."

"The examples of the Selwyn and Horokiwi cannot be regarded as exceptions. Rather they appear to be just two instances of a growing list of degraded lowland waterways in New Zealand," continued Wayne McCallum.

State of denial

Wayne McCallum's expert views received little or no comment. The impression was that Fish and Game and North Canterbury in particular, did not want to know about it.

There was "a state of denial"

Wayne McCallum obviously felt the same. He wrote "perhaps the biggest factor in causing frustration is the failure to acknowledge the existence of a crisis at all."

Six years ago, a friend Bud, an experienced fly fisherman, who had made regular annual trips over 43 years from the Wairarapa to the Maruia River in the South Island, reflected on his 2013 trip as his "worst ever" of 43 years.

"Over a period of 43 years I have fished the Maruia and my recent visit of 11 days, despite perfect weather for spotting and fishing, was the poorest ever."

Bud told the Nelson Marlborough Fish and Game Council of his concern in a letter. On his visit in late January 2013, Bud caught his 424th ("catch and release") trout from the Maruia river – the number of trout caught, showing he was well acquainted with the river.

Bud's assessment of the 2013 visit as "the worst fishing trip" he'd had in 40 years to the Maruia was based on in his words "fewest trout seen, in spite of the number of hours of hard work and in perfect conditions of clear sky, full sun, no wind, clear water and perfect water level"

There was, in his 2013 trip, unlimited potential for working "every inch" of water.

His only limit was "my physical endurance and fatigue." There were no other fisherman – or

kayaks – to disturb the trout. “I only averaged seeing 3 fish every 6 hours in perfect spotting conditions.”

“Takes” worked out at one every 5.5 hours of diligent hard work in perfect conditions using the same techniques and nymphs and dries that produced over 400 fish over the other 40 odd years previously.

Diary doesn't lie

Bud's diary – over the years – does not lie and shows his best day ever was 16 landed and 5 lost, 2 days of 14, lots of 10 and 11, dozens of 7,8,9's plus disaster days, usually due to poor weather, windy, or loss of sun. And there had been days of 2,3 and 4 trout all fishing the exact same water as in late January this year.

Bud's diary also recorded this decline in fish numbers with extensive notes of falling numbers beginning Feb. 7, 2006 and the same comments of decline every year to 2013.

Bud went on to say in his letter, “in 2013, it was such wonderful weather and easy casting and because wading/crossing was easier it was very pleasant. But it became clear that I was fishing water that once held numerous fish 20,30 and 40 years ago, now held very few.”

“In all, my latest visit was characterised by glorious weather and beautiful water – but no fish. I bring this to your attention because in my home region in north Wairarapa, I have seen the same trend of declining trout numbers.”

And on the “state of self-denial” Bud told the Nelson Marlborough Fish and Game Council that “It seems to me to be wrong – and dishonest – for Fish and Game councils claiming the best fishing for years as some councils do. I understand selling licences has a need for income but that should not obscure the reality of the decline in trout numbers in many rivers. The Maruia seems yet another example of diminishing trout stocks.”

The reaction from Nelson-Marlborough Fish and Game was muted.

The Fish and Game reply sympathised he “had such a poor season this year” but added that “reports prior to Christmas suggested the river was fishing well, but it had a big flood in early January which would not have helped.”

But undeniably Bud had noticed steady declines particularly since 2006 – seven years before he wrote to the fish and game council.

Crisis undeniable

But Bud back then saw the situation as a crisis – needing attention and with questions that urgently need answering.

What are the causes?

Increased dairy farming further up the valley? The use of agricultural chemicals and leaching? Pesticides such as DEW 600 applied for grass grub and known to be lethal to aquatic life? Extensive aerial dropping of 1080 poison for an imagined possum pest? Had Fish and Game researched changes of bottom fauna and water chemistry changes with this intensive dairy farming? So many questions!

Bud said the answer to NZ rivers would not be found by denying the decline.

“It’s up to Fish and Game to find it out,” Bud said at the time.

And then he candidly added “Otherwise Fish and Game is negligent, the fishery declines and Fish and Game’s income, i.e. Licence money, will dry up.

My assessment is that the outlook of Nelson Marlborough Fish and Game has changed since Bud wrote his letter six years ago. With a change in managership Nelson Marlborough Fish and Game are concerned.

But what a pity the concern was not shown over ten years ago, and that Wayne McCallum’s warning was not heeded twenty years ago.

The Twenty dollar cast by Domenick Swentosky

Joey let go of the golden-brown trout and watched it tail-kick into the shadows. With a big grin, my son handed me the net before sliding to the right and finding the submerged limestone ledge just downstream of the rock again.



For an eleven-year-old kid, sometimes the water that’s both wadable and close enough to where trout are feeding is limited. This morning, with trout feeding in the deepest and darkest water near large midstream boulders, our options were even more limited than usual. So now that we’d found a good thing, I knew Joey wanted to keep it going.

“Hey Dad, what’ll you give me if I hook another trout out of here?” Joey asked, as he threw an upstream setup cast.

“I’ll give you the net,” I said, flatly.

My son turned to look at me. And I had one of those moments where I saw myself in him again — like looking in a mirror, thirty-some years ago. My boys carry a lot of my traits. I worked at night and was a daytime Dad for them until they went to kindergarten, so a lot of me is

embedded in them. All the time we spent together made that deep transmission inevitable. It's both good and bad, I suppose. And I still don't know if I accidentally taught them to be impatient or if it's just a kid thing.

But when Joey turned to me, still buzzing from the event of the last trout, he showed a pure enjoyment of the moment that I understood too. I felt it in him because I felt it in myself. We had driven the extra miles because he wanted to be here. We had left the house at 5:30 am because I had suggested an early morning, and he agreed. We had parked in tall grass-gone-to-seed and cut through the woods because I had promised him no one else would be here.

Sure, the trout were fewer in number, and he knew that too. But all of it matched up with how we both love the rivers where trout live. And after a couple hours of trial and error, we had finally dialled in a water type and a method that had the fish tuning in.

"Hey, Dad. How about this . . . If I catch a fish on my next cast, you give me thirty dollars?" Joey deadpanned. The touch of innocence and hope that he added to it untied my natural resistance to handing out money.

I thought about the proposal for a moment.

As much as my boys enjoy fishing, there is still plenty of other things that gain their attention. My younger son, Aiden, is enthralled with his neighbourhood friendships, these days. And both boys play a lot of baseball, ride bikes and hold a host of other interests besides sharing Dad's trout fishing obsession.

So, I liked what Joey was thinking. And I was intrigued by the possibilities of this incentive. What pre-teen kid isn't looking for an extra lump sum of cash to roll in with the allowance? Just imagine how far this motivation could carry out, I thought.

"How about I give you twenty dollars if you call your shot?" I asked him.

Joey looked back at me, with curiosity. Now *he* was intrigued.

"Tell you what," I said, leaning forward in my wading boots. "On each fishing trip, I'll give you one chance to earn twenty bucks. You can pick any cast throughout the day. Call it out, and if you catch a trout on that cast, you'll be twenty dollars richer."

Joey loved it.

"Do I have to net the trout?" He asked.

"Of course," I replied.

"Oh, this is nice," he said. "I'm going to save it for a really good time. You know, sometimes you can just feel when you're in a good spot and everything is going right, and ..."

"I know," I interrupted. "That's one of my favourite things about fly fishing. Sometimes you can just tell when you're going to catch a trout."

Joey knew we had less than a half hour before we needed to walk out. So, he didn't save it long. And after having already caught three brown trout in the same deep slot, he waited until he reached what we both recognized as the prime lie before he cashed in.

“Okay, Dad,” Joey bellowed over the white-water. “Here’s the twenty-dollar cast ...”

His casting loop unfolded and kicked the nymph over with precision. And when the fly tucked into the darkest side of the limestone chunk, Joey kept the rod tip up, holding all extra line off the water. It was a gorgeous drift. And the air thickened with anticipation.

We watched together in silence as Joey milked that drift until the very end. And I think we were both a little surprised when nothing interrupted the long, deep ride of over thirty feet.

“Not this time, buddy,” I told him.

Joey flicked his wrist and repeated the same cast to the dark side of the rock. And because the world is a wonderful place, a no-doubter clobbered the stonefly nymph.

“Oohhhhh!!” We both yelled in unison as Joey drove the hook home, and a mid-teens wild brown rolled and flashed in the dark currents below.

Joey had been one cast off.

All the way home, Joey talked about the next twenty-dollar cast. It was a good drive with a lot of laughs and memories.

Just wait until his brother finds out about the twenty-dollar cast ...

Fish hard, friends.

Fly Fishing Montana’s Spring Shoulder by Al Simpson

Winter is nearing its end here in Montana, although begrudgingly. One day it’s sunny and nearly 70 degrees, and the next it’s 30 degrees with snow squalls. But spring inches its way closer every day, evidenced the trees beginning to sport their spring-green canopies.



“Greening-up” on the Ruby river

Stream conditions change quickly as well, vexing fly fishers eager to cast a fly. On warm days, the mountain snow melts, the streams rise, and their water becomes turbid. Wading is made more difficult due to the higher flows and reduced visibility. On cold days, the melting stops, the streams fall, and their water clears a bit. Wading is easier.



The Madison River, high but clear

The trout hope that spring is coming soon. After a long winter, they are skinny, and lack the stamina for a long fight.



The water remains cold, low 40's. Thus, the bugs that trout feed on are still growing slowly and remain small. You can almost hear the trout grumbling to one another, "I'm tired of midges! Where's the meat?"

Angling is challenging at this time of the year. The trout sulk in the cold water, with its lack of bigger fare. They still mostly take small nymphs, size 18 or smaller. On cold days, even a bump on the nose with a nymph may still not result in a take. A good day is 1-2 fish/hour.

On sunny days, the water temperature reaches the mid to upper forties. This prompts scant midge hatches in the afternoon in the quiet stretches of water. Some fish move in, and warily feed on the surface. Some will take a size 20 Adams or Griffith's gnat, but a Klinkhammer emerger or a Quigley cripple gets more takes.

Small black stoneflies and size 14 black caddis may also emerge on sunny days. But the hatches are modest at best, and little surface action occurs.

On cloudy days, blue wing olive hatches sometimes occur in the mid-afternoon. This is the singular winter and spring shoulder hatch that seems to really excite the trout. What BWO's lack in size, they must make up for in taste! When a hatch happens, the fish come to the surface and feed aggressively. But once again, an unweighted nymph trailed behind a dun imitation, gets most of the attention.

With such scant hatches, fishing the subsurface is much more productive than fishing the surface. I usually fish a tandem of a stonefly nymph or a woolly bugger, size 8-10, trailed with a size 16-22 nymph. Almost all my hook-ups are on the smaller nymph patterns. Streamers catch a few fish as well.

The spring shoulder has lasted only a few weeks, brought to an end by rising temperatures resulting in surging spring run-off from melting snow.



The shoulder offers a nice mix of surface and subsurface fishing for trout, brought out of their winter doldrums by the warming waters. But in all honesty, like the trout, I am now eager for runoff to end, and spring to arrive in full, with its robust hatches of bigger bugs!

Editor note: This article is especially for Dorwin who would normally be in Montana enjoying some nice warm weather and enjoying time on Madison river, which is just over the hill from his hometown of Virginia City.

Water issues involve both Fish and Human health by Waikanae Watcher

Opinion by Rex Gibson

Government backing away

The Labour, NZ First and Green Parties all campaigned in the last election on promises to clean up New Zealand's waterways. However, disappointingly, the latest announcements are as close to a National Party approach as you could get.

The stream fencing is a good public relations exercise, but three metre margins is a "one-size-fits-all approach" that takes no account of the variability in soil types to transfer nitrates in particular from paddock to waterway. Government has known for some time that artificial nitrogen fertiliser is a major contributor to groundwater nitrate levels yet is imposing only a token limitation on its use.

Why? The vested interests in the artificial nitrogen sales have clearly had their way at the expense of public health.

Recent work by the New Zealand Federation of Freshwater Anglers using the sophisticated NICO Water Nitrate Analyser has shown that the health of Ashburton residents is already at serious risk from this pollutant.

Sixty-seven water samples from household water bores in and around Ashburton were tested. Most were from farms or lifestyle blocks. The readings ranged from 13.2 down to 0.06 mg N/L.

Cancer Risk

What do the figures mean? They were referred to Dr Mike Joy (Victoria University of Wellington). He stated "of the samples taken:

- 90% exceed increased significant risk of colo-rectal cancer (CRC) levels.
- more than 80% were in the group where there was a 15% increased risk of CRC.
- many were even higher, 54% exceed half current Maximum Allowable Value (MAV). the Ministry of Health trigger level
- 10% exceed MAV.

This situation is occurring in dairying areas across the country. Clearly, we have a freshwater crisis that is fast becoming a human health crisis. The costs to Cantabrians of the unrestrained intensification that led to this freshwater contamination as well as other impacts; like less water availability, are becoming more obvious every day. I'm sure this will be looked back on as a very dark time in Canterbury's History revealing the utter failure of Environment Canterbury (ECan).

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The analysis shows that fish are at risk

To the anglers, the data means that only 27 of the 67 water sources would still support trout, cockabullies', and other native fish etc., (i.e. the 27 were below the toxicity level for trout of 3.5 mg/L).

All of the rest – 40 in all – would not and were also above ECan's precautionary maximum value for Christchurch water as approved after the proposal by the Waimakariri Water Zone Committee (3.8 mg/L).

A recent Colmar Brunton poll showed that over 70% of New Zealanders still see water quality as a major concern.

The latest proposals do nothing to significantly reduce the potentially lethal nitrate levels, or the long-term costs for future generations in cleaning up the ongoing environmental poisoning inflicted by the present industrial farming model.

(First published in the magazine for The Council of Outdoor Recreation Associations of NZ Inc)

PROTECT OUR WATERWAYS

STOP THE SPREAD OF FRESHWATER PESTS

- CHECK** Remove all plant material from items that have been in the water.
- CLEAN** Soak or scrub all items for at least one minute in a 5% solution of detergent.
- DRY** If cleaning is not practical, dry items completely and then leave for at least 48 hours.

See www.biossecurity.govt.nz/cleaning for more ways to Check, Clean, Dry. If you restrict your activity to a single waterway there is no need to Check, Clean, Dry.

New Zealand Government
Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

3 Reasons you should be using Loop Knots by Colin K Breck



Making loop knots part of your rigging method can result in more fish landing here

Loop knots have an integral place in the way most experienced anglers rig their flies. Despite common misconception, there are a great many loop knots that are exceedingly simple to tie. Sure, there are loop knots that are cumbersome or even difficult to tie, but some of the best loop knots are easy to learn and to tie streamside. But the main reason that most experienced anglers readily use loop knots is that, in a great many scenarios, loop knots provide significant advantages over knots that are fixed to the fly's hook eye.

Following are a few reasons why, if you are not already regularly using loop knots in your fishing, you should be. Even beginner anglers will likely be familiar with the most common of these reasons, but the others may be new information even to some of you who have been at it for a while.

Better and more natural fly movement

This is the justification for loop knots that most anglers learn first and usually in the context of streamers or flies like the woolly buggie. Flies that are supposed to represent larger, swimming insects in the water have a significantly more natural movement when attached to your leader or tippet with a loop knot. Instead of being attached with a rigid, fixed connection that restricts the fly's movement, a fly on a loop knot can slide and float more freely, producing a more natural action

But this does not apply to only streamers. I often encounter anglers that have worked loop knots into their repertoire when fishing streamers but limit their use to those scenarios. The same principle that applies with streamers also applies to wet flies and most certainly applies to dead drifting nymphs.

A more natural movement of the fly results in a greater number of takes and that results in a higher catch rate. Simple.

Sink your fly faster

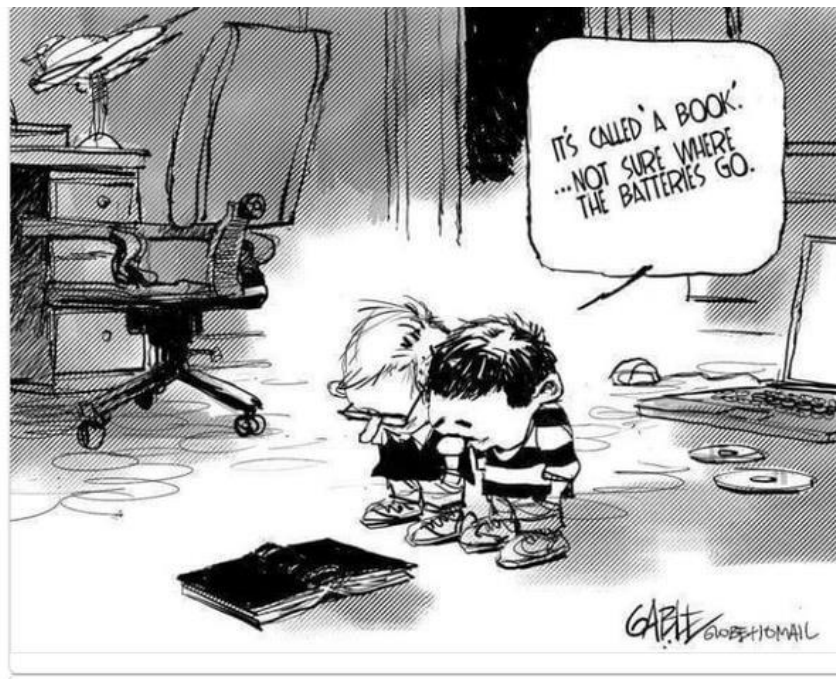
In his book, *Fly Fish Better: Practical Advice on Tackle, Methods, and Flies*, noted angler and author Art Scheck highlights a lesser known reason for choosing a loop knot for your terminal connection: faster fly sink rates. The logic behind Scheck's contention is that a weighted fly (tungsten bead head, lead bead chain eyes, etc) can adopt a nose-down position and sink faster when its connection to the leader or tippet is a flexible one. According to Scheck, though this effect is more noticeable in still water it also offers an advantage when using a strip-pause retrieve, allowing the fly to sink more readily during the pause.

Though the advantages loop knots offer to flies that need to get deep may not be pronounced, it offers anglers another reason to choose a loop knot when rigging their flies especially when considering that many of the situations described above in which the angler is seeking freer, more natural movement for their flies are also situations during which the angler is hoping to get their fly down deep, often quickly.

Break fewer knots

While all specific claims about knot strength and breakage rates should be taken with an enormous grain of salt, it is valuable to consider that some loop knots are widely held to be stronger than their fixed-connection counterparts. My personal favourite loop knot, the Non-slip Mono Loop knot, is considered by many anglers to have 100% knot strength.

While remembering what I just said about treating strength rate claims and such as considerably dubious, keep in mind that means many experienced anglers are suggesting that tying the non-slip loop will in no way degrade the strength of your leader or tippet. You will have a hard time finding people to make that claim about fixed knots such as the clinch knot, improved clinch knot or even the Orvis knot.



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1 ½ hour experience:

- Adult (Age 16+) - \$35
- Child (Age 7 -15) - \$25
- Row of 5 seats - \$150

The last four months has had a major impact on Nga Manu due to no visitors and income, but the animals in their care have been well looked after and are now showing signs that Spring is in the air and the 'annual event' is just around the corner.

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

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

malcolm1@xtra.co.nz

Purpose:

To promote the art and sport of Fly Fishing.

To respect the ownership of land adjoining waterways.

To promote the protection of fish and wildlife habitat.

To promote friendship and goodwill between members.

To promote and encourage the exchange of information between members.

Club meetings

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

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

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

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

IMPORTANT NOTICE

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

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