



*Remembering our Past President Graeme Waters
22 April 1941 – 23 June 2020*



Kapiti Fly Fishing Club

July 2020 Newsletter

This month's front cover: Sadly, on Tuesday 23 June Graeme Walters passed away, our thoughts go to Gloria and family.

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Club activities

Date	Event	Coordinator
Monday 27 July	Club Night – speaker Phil Teal Fish and Game	Michael
Weekend 15 – 17 August	Turangi Region	Michael
Monday 21 August	Club Night	Michael
Sunday 30 August	Day Trip Hutt River	Malcolm
September TBC	Turangi Region	TBC
Thursday 1 October	Opening Day	

You are invited to the next KFFC Club Night on Monday 27 July – come and listen to Phil Teal Wellington Fish and Game and Dan Brizzel who will provide an overview of the Fish in Schools programme.

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



President report

Well, here we are, right in the middle of Winter, and it seems to me to have been a cold one but with little wind so it is time to dust off your winter gear and head to those areas of the country like the central north island where the fishing can be great at this time of the year.

We are running two Turangi trips this winter and one a bit later when Lake Otamangakau opens on 1 October so keep an eye open in both your email inbox and the Newsletter for updates

The first trip on the weekend of 15-16th August is already fully subscribed with 15 keen anglers hyped up to hit those monster Rainbows and occasional Brownies so look out for trip stories and photos.

A number of us attended Past President Graeme Waters funeral on Monday and Past President Chris Bryant gave a nice eulogy on behalf of our members. Graeme was held in high esteem in Kapiti which was obvious by the large number of persons at the service.

Graeme's passing made me search through the older club newsletters dating back to 2002 and it has given me a greater appreciation of all the good work, done with a great deal of fun and humour it would seem, that all members have contributed over the years to this great club

Tony Jacques (TJ) and Angela are departing back to the UK in mid-August to start a new phase in their lives and I know that they will be really missed by a lot of us. TJ claims that business and work reasons are why they are moving however I think it is more likely the closeness of Iceland and other areas where the monster trout hang out!

Maybe TJ will lead a club trip there so get saving!

Along with trip and club night planning and all the usual stuff there is a fair bit happening behind the scenes with Ross Goodman heading up the new member induction and Gordon Baker taking the lead in helping new members through the casting process. Gordon and Malcolm are also getting ready to set up fly tying sessions.

Gordon is also carrying out the survey requested by members at the AGM. He is very brave and doing it by phone so if you have not heard from Gordon, yet you will soon.

Do not forget to come along to Club night on Monday 27th when Phil Teal CEO Wellington Fish and Game will update us on matters Fish and Game. Phil is a great speaker so do not miss out.

Finally, a reminder that it is up to all of you to send in both trip reports and photos to Malcolm for the Newsletter and Kras for both the Club website and our Facebook pages. I am sure that along with the club trips a lot of members are out and about on private trips. It really helps if this can be shared with other members and no you do not need to divulge your secret spots!

The world is in a difficult space right now and we are so lucky in our great little country to be able to get out and about and enjoy life.

Kia Kaha

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

Seeking Fly-fishing Gear- Ray Deklerk

One of our new members Ray Deklerk needs to purchase and invest in a whole new fly fishing set up, Ray has been actively fly fishing prior to immigrating to NZ but left all his gear behind. So, Ray needs to invest in set of new gear that will keep him going for a few years, the following is on the list:

- Quality Fly-Rod 5/6 or 6/7 weight
- Reel with line and backing
- Fly Box
- Fly's
- Fly fishing Vest
- Landing net
- Waders
- Odds and ends.

If you have any quality fly fishing gear that you wish to sell, or no longer require please contact Ray:

- Email: Ray.Deklerk@ace.co.nz
- Phone: 04 472 4830
- Mobile: 027 2000 622

Memories of Graeme Waters - President of the Kapiti Fly Fishing Club from 2009 - 2010

One of the first club trips that I participated on not long after joining the club was a weekend trip to Turangi, our accommodation the Cabins at the Habitat where I shared a cabin with Graeme and Noel Thomas. I have no memory of what the actual fishing was like, but this was the first time that I spent time with Graeme.

Like many of you I have many fond memories of Graeme, one that comes to mind was the time when Graeme taught us a lesson on the art of fly-tying'. A group of us were around at Noel's and we were tying the Pheasant Tail nymph and when we finished we had a look at our creations, Graeme's nymph had bits sticking out all over the place and looked more like a spider than a nymph. A few weeks later while out on a club trip Graeme tied on his creation and promptly landed a nice rainbow, the nymph may have had bits sticking out but that made no difference to the trout.

On another occasion Graeme organised a club trip to the Rotorua Lakes and on the front cover of this month's newsletter is a photo of Graeme holding onto a lovely trout that he caught, since the first trip to the Rotorua Lakes Graeme has organised annual adventures to these lakes. As a member of our club Graeme played a continually active role both on club trips and as a member of the Management Committee, in 2009 Graeme served as our very capable President.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Ralph Lane who liaised with Gloria and the family on behalf of the Kapiti Fly Fishing Club, thanks Ralph as I know that you and Graeme were close friends. A special thanks goes to Chris Bryant who represent the club and provided an excellent eulogy on behalf of Graeme's involvement in the club and all things fly-fishing.

Graeme will be missed by many of our members, our thoughts at this sad time are with Gloria and family.



The following are a few photos from the past



We sent Gloria and the family a bouquet of flowers and the attached message on behalf of all our members.



To Gloria and the Walters Family
So sorry for your loss and in deep appreciation of Graham's founding contribution to the Kapiti Fly Fishing Club.
Thinking of you from the President, Committee, and all members of the Kapiti Fly Fishing Club

Learning to identify insects, anywhere, anytime.



Most anglers open their fly box, look aimlessly at the hundreds (maybe more) of dollars of flies and make their fly selection based on their past experiences or whatever “looks good” in their box. “I did good on that one last year, guess I’ll try it out.”

When is the last time you heard a guide say that?

You don’t, and it is because they first ask the question, what are the trout eating today? Once they have a strong, educated decision, they select the fly and begin to catch loads of fish. The knowledge that helps them select the right fly faster and more accurately is fly fishing entomology.

This article will help you understand the orders, stages, sizes, colours, seasonal and time of day behaviours of all insects you will need to identify on the river in order to catch trout. This is the first step in perfecting your fly selection skills.

Before we begin on the list, however, let’s understand what orders and stages exist with trout insects.

Orders of Insect Categories

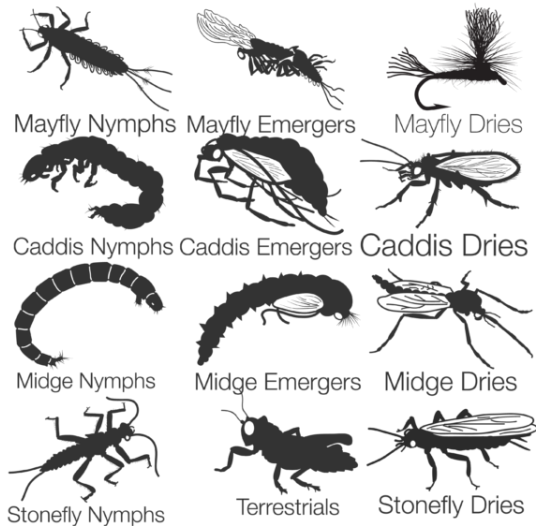
Let’s learn quickly what we mean by orders and stages, then we’ll show the list of insects by order, category, size and colour.

Orders are just a fancy and scientific way of saying a category of insect. Remember in high-school biology when they taught Kingdom, Phylum, Class, ORDER, Family, Genus, Species? Of course, you don’t, who listens in high-school biology? You should have listened though because it relates to fly fishing

All you really need to know is that as fly fishermen, nearly all of our fly patterns we use imitate **orders of insects**, not the specific species. Aside from some mayflies (Hex, Green Drakes, BWO, etc) and some stoneflies (salmonflies, yellow sallies etc), we keep it simple and only focus on the categories.

This is great news for all of us, because instead of having to remember 10,000 insect species, we just need to understand 13 categories. If you can identify the order of the insect, you are more than 50% of the way to selecting the right fly.

Stages of Insect Lifecycles



Stages of an insect simply refer to their current stage within an insect lifecycle.

Insects go through complete and incomplete metamorphosis.

Complete metamorphosis includes a pupa stage while incomplete skips that step and gets on with the story.

Most insects that you need to know for trout fishing go through a larva (nymph), emerger, adult (dry), and spinner stage. We refer to these plainly as nymph, pupa, emerger, dry, spinner when fly fishing and they often correlate to fly patterns.

Not all insects have these stages, and some have an extra pupa stage, and only some of those stages apply to trout feeding behaviour...We know it gets a bit complicated, but for now hold on to the fact that this provides a list for you to digest, not the entire subject.

Let us simplify and give you a framework you can use to start learning your bugs. In it you will see all the major insect orders (categories), the stages of importance to the angler, and common hook sizes and colours you'll want to imitate them with. Book mark this page and refer to it often. On the river, at the tying bench, whenever you need to match the bug or need help remembering what to expect on the river for what time of year.

The Complete List of Insects for Fly Fisher people

Midges



- **Stages:** Nymph, Pupa, Emerger, Dry
- **Hook sizes:** #14 and 16
- **Colours:** Any colour imaginable – Black, Olive, Purple would be the top of my list
- **Season:** All year round
- **Time of the day:** All day but when the water is cold later in the day.
- **Important – early Spring and late Autumn**

Mayflies



- **Stages:** Nymph, Pupa, Emerger, Dry
- **Hook sizes:** #12 and 20
- **Colours:** Any colour,
- **Season:** All year round, but mostly Spring, Summer and Autumn
- **Time of the day:** Morning to Mid-day and then evening light change.
- **Important Nymphs should be used at any time of the year.**

Caddis



- **Stages:** Nymph, Pupa, Emerger, Dry
- **Hook sizes:** #10 and 20
- **Colours:** Black, Olive, Brown, Tan, White
- **Season:** Late Spring to late Autumn
- **Time of the day:** All day with Mid-morning and Late Evening most important.
- **Important, Nymphs should be used at any time of the year.**

Stoneflies



- **Stages:** Nymph and Dry
- **Hook sizes:** #6 - 16
- **Colours:** Black, Green, Brown,
- **Season:** Late Spring to late Mid-Autumn
- **Time of the day:** Mid-morning to late evening most important.

Important, found among rough gravel or large stones – rocks on well oxygenated water.

Damsel



- **Stages:** Nymph and Dry
- **Hook sizes:** #8 -16
- **Colours:** Blue, Red, Black, Tan,
- **Season:** Late Spring to late Mid-Autumn
- **Time of the day:** All day with early morning and late evening most important.

Important, the Nymph is highly effective on Lakes and still water.

Dragonflies



- **Stages:** Nymph and Dry
- **Hook sizes:** #8 -16
- **Colours:** Blue, Red, Black, Tan,
- **Season:** Late Spring to late Mid-Autumn
- **Time of the day:** All day with early morning and late evening most important.

Water Boatman



- **Stages:** Nymph and Dry
- **Hook sizes:** #10 - 16
- **Colours:** Olives, Browns, Tans
- **Season:** Late Spring to late Mid-Autumn they hatch in late Autumn.
- **Time of the day:** All day with early morning and late evening most important.

Hoppers



- **Stages:** Dry
- **Hook sizes:** #6 - 16
- **Colours:** Olives, Browns, Tans, Yellow
- **Season:** Midsummer to late Mid-Autumn.
- **Time of the day:** All day with late afternoon to evening most important.

Beetles



- **Stages:** Dry
- **Hook sizes:** #12 - 18
- **Colours:** Olives, Browns, Black, Purples, Blues
- **Season:** Late spring to late Mid-Autumn.
- **Time of the day:** All day with early morning and late evening most important.

When you break it all down to these categories it does not look that overwhelming. Contained within this list is 99% of all the insects you will need in your fly box including their basic seasonal and time of day behaviours. Does not look like much but when you begin adding up all the variations, it's no wonder why we all have a dozen fly boxes and still complain to our spouses we don't have enough flies.

This information is an excellent guide to helping you stock your box, understanding the basics of fly-fishing entomology and beginning to learn how to match that hatch whether it is above or below the water's surface. Memorize these stages, sizes, colours, seasons and time of day and you will be well on your way to preparing your fly box correctly.

Want to learn more?

As you can see, this is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to learning about fly selection and entomology. If you would like to learn more there are several excellent books available:

- **Trout Stream Insects of New Zealand by Norman Marsh** – this is a New Zealand Classic book; I would recommend this book.
- **Bug Water by Arlen Thomason** – excellent description of the actual nymph plus instruction on how to tie them, I would recommend this book.
- **Nymphs by Ernest Schwiebert** – comprehensive coverage of the many types of nymphs
- **Modern Terrestrials by Rick Takahashi and Jerry Hubka** – if you want to learn how to tie a wide range of Terrestrial insects such as Grasshoppers then this is the book.
- **Modern Midges by Rick Takahashi and Jerry Hubka** – this book focuses on the various Midge patterns that are highly effective in our local waters.

Editor's note:

Please remember that the club has a large selection of books including a copy of Trout Stream Insects of New Zealand. I have copies of the above list of books and numerous other books, I would be happy to bring them along to a meeting so that you can have a browse through them, or you are welcome to call in home at any time.

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

Rise up: understanding trout rise forms by Spencer Durrant



Aside from a healthy dose of luck, a well-rounded education on aquatic insects is the most valuable piece of tackle for any fly fisher. Certainly a witless angler with a \$1,000 fly rod might get lucky and catch a fish or two just out of sheer persistence, but a fly fisher with an old Fenwick Fen-glass from the 70s and a studied understanding of how trout eat will always put more fish in the net.

In no instance is this so acutely obvious, I think, than in dry fly fishing. One more than one occasion, I have futilely thrown one good drift after another to a river boiling with trout, only to have my dry fly completely ignored.

Then, I met a guy named Ryan McCullough, who happens to be the best dry fly fisherman I have ever shared a river with, and who schooled me on the art of identifying rise forms. Identifying rise forms, in turn, allows you to identify what fish are eating.

His secret?

Watching.

What is a Rise Form?

The way Ryan explains it, a rise form is the particular movements, sounds, and disturbances on the water's surface made by a trout eating dry flies—all of which differ depending on what a trout is eating.

For me, learning to recognize these differences led to what felt like a quantum leap forward in my angling abilities. Before, I would get frustrated and contemplate walking off the river with an hour of daylight still left during a big hatch. Now, I am confident that I am fishing the right fly at the right time which means that if I'm not hooking up, it's likely my presentation that's to blame.

While presentation is a crucially important part of successful dry fly fishing, I do not want to focus on that here. Instead, I want to focus on the streamside education Ryan gave me all those years ago, on a forgotten stream in the high desert of Oregon.

Emerger Eats

The first signs of a good hatch are the subtle, soft rises of trout looking up and snacking on emerging insects. Most often, this is characterized by trout rising with their dorsal fin and tails out of the water, but the rest of their body submerged. It is as if the fish just levitates straight up in the water column, then back down again.

When trout are snacking on emergers, they do not make the classic *plop* sound most often associated with rising fish. In fact, emerger rises are fairly quiet, and unless you are paying close attention, can be hard to miss, especially in bigger water.

When you see this, it means that trout are eating bugs stuck in the surface film — or just below it. Emerging insects, especially mayflies, spend a relatively long time in the surface film as they emerge from their shucks and take flight as full duns.

Duns and Cripples

In the midst of a big hatch, you will see the classic rise that all anglers, I think, long for in some way — the mouth and head of a trout breaking the surface. This shows you that the trout is not only feeding with abandon, but also that it is eating flies right off the surface.

In most cases, this sort of rise means that fish are taking either duns or cripples. I don't want to get too far into the weeds of whether fish eat more duns or cripples (the answer is cripples), so it's enough to remember that the rise form for trout feeding on either bug is usually the same.

You likely will not see much more of the trout breaking the water's surface when they are eating duns and cripples. Trout like to position themselves right below the surface, moving up and down with their mouths open to vacuum up whatever is floating by on top. At first glance, it might look like the trout are just feeding without any regard for what they are eating. If you take a few minutes to watch, though, you will see the fish targeting specific bugs — especially when they are keyed in on duns.

Spinners and Spent-Wings

Towards the end of a hatch, mayflies in the final stage of their life's "spin" slowly back to the water's surface to mate and lay eggs, where they are often quickly gobbled. These bugs are, I believe, the most sought after by trout, because both spinners and spent wings are easy prey and often descend to the water in massive numbers, triggering a trout feeding frenzy.

I am going to borrow Ryan's words here in describing what trout look like when rising to these bugs:

"The classic head-to-tail rise is accompanied by the trout leading with an open mouth above the surface. You will know it because it will sound like constant gulping or lip-smacking. Sometimes, a trout will feed so actively that the top of his body hardly leaves the surface and you will see a half-open and closing mouth that looks more like a person swimming and breathing than a fish eating."

Trout expend the energy to stay near the surface and eat these bugs because the payoff is worth it. During a spinner fall, the calories a trout can intake can greatly exceed what it expends by

swimming against the current at the surface (which is significantly stronger than the current elsewhere in the water column).

Other Rises

There are two other rise forms that deserve mentioning here, the first being the splashy, loud rise that makes every angler whip his or her head around looking for its source when it's heard on the river. The majority of the time, this rise is caused by a small fish trying to get to bugs before larger fish.

However, in the case of a good stonefly hatch, or if there are any terrestrials on the water, big fish will often hit those bugs hard. That behaviour can cause the same splashy sounds you hear when smaller fish are eating.

And last, but certainly not least — do not discount the smallest, most subtle rise of them all. You see this most often when fishing slow-moving water, or in crystal-clear spring creeks. It looks more like a dimple in the water's surface than a true rise. Ryan calls these "sipping rises," because in many cases, trout are doing just that — sipping bugs right off the water's surface.

These are the most difficult rises to cast to, because fish that have the time to leisurely swim around, inspect flies, then casually sip them off the surface are generally well-attuned to the traps we lay for them. As someone once said to me while fishing the Green River in Utah, "It's like the fish have time to come up and count the tailfeathers on your fly, and if there's too many, they won't eat."

In these instances, a smaller bug on a light, long leader is your best friend. I love throwing small midge patterns (size 26 parachute midges are fantastic for fish like this) but if there is a significant bug hatch on the water, try to match that as best you can.

Watch and Learn

To wrap up, I want to reinforce what I believe is the most valuable lesson I've ever learned in regards to fly fishing: There's nothing wrong with sitting on the riverbank, watching trout eat, and absorbing that knowledge. You do not have to immediately start casting when you see rising fish. In fact, I would wager that the rush to cast and catch (or at least try to) is what leads to many anglers to leave a river of rising fish empty-handed and frustrated.

Back in March, before the world went to hell in a handbasket, I sat on the banks of a river with Ryan and we just watched. We were there to fish a blue-winged olive hatch, and the fish were not really working the surface. It was not until we saw consistent rises on emergers that we got off the bank and started casting. All told, we spent the better part of an hour just watching those fish.

If you want to truly decode rise forms and learn to fish the flies that trout are eating, then there is no better teacher than the trout themselves. Take five, ten or even twenty minutes, watch feeding trout feed, and you will be amazed at how much you learn.

Editor's Note: There are two exceptionally good books that cover 'trout rises,' if you are lucky enough to spot a copy, I would recommend you buy it.

- ***In the Ring of the Rise by Vincent C Marinaro***
- ***The Trout and the Fly by Brian Clarke and John Goddard***

Dry Flies, foul-mouthed daughters, and the world's best cherry pie by Willoughby Johnson



On my third cast of the morning, I hear the tell-tale clunk of the fly hitting the rod. I figure no big deal. Just a quick untangle and we're back in business. But oh, what a tangle. No excuses either — there was no wind, and the creek runs through an open, grassy pasture. The banks are high, but I am fishing straight upstream. There is nothing I was trying to avoid that might have made my cast wonky. Just a rushed back cast and an epic tangle.

If the tippet wasn't so fine, or if I had actual glasses instead of cheaters, or if I had small nimble fingers instead of bratwurst, I might have a chance of getting it undone. Just when I start making some headway, the wind gusts, making the tangle worse and blowing away what little remains of my determination.

This was just supposed to be a quick run through of this hole. But I did not even get to the hole I was meant to fish because I thought: oh, maybe I will check out that water down below.

Not that you should not try new water. But sometimes you get so distracted by shiny possibility you lose sight of the thing you were supposed to do in the first place. And while you are off on that tangent, you get so tangled up you have to walk up to the car to get the gear you should have had with you. By the time you get back from the car, the fish have stopped rising. Opportunity has passed you by. Life lessons at eight am on a cloudless June morning beside a dainty, spring creek in the Driftless area of Wisconsin.

It is a dry-dropper rig and just as I get it retied, Nick ambles down the creek.

"What the heck happened? I saw you go up to the car."

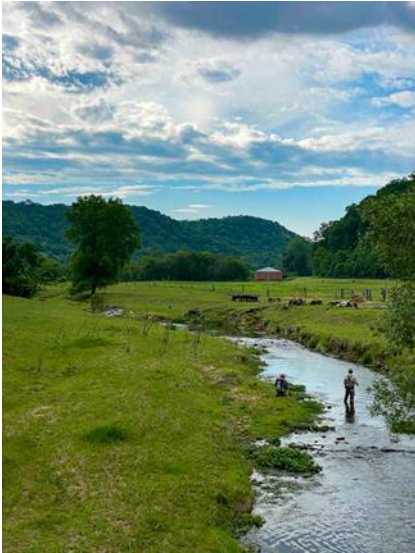
Nick has sunburned skin, brilliantly blue eyes, wears a hoody and tan jeans and wading boots. He looks more like an aging skateboarder in a fedora than your stereotypical fishing guide.

I tell him my tale and he takes my line in hand and looks over my re-rigged job.

Outcome the nippers. As he is retying, he tells me to work the deep pool up beyond the wire fence in front of me, then there is a quiet run under a low-hanging tree. See if I can manage to get a drift below that tree.

He is fishing with my daughter Wynn in a hole just up from there and they are hauling them in. So, unless something changes, I will find him there. Last night Wynn did not catch a lot of fish and bravely said it's not about the body count. Good form and absolutely true. But, Nick says, "it's a heck of a lot more fun catching fish."

He looks down at the re-rigged flies, says, ok you are good to go and disappears in the tall grass. I make several casts up the pool, finally reaching the chute where the feeding fish should be. There is no doubt there are fish in here – they were surface feeding earlier and the fish numbers in the Driftless are staggering. But they are not feeding now, above or below. So, I reel in.



Walking the bank, I can see way up the valley. The creek winds through a vast grassy meadow up past an immaculate farmstead: tidy white-frame farmhouse, classic red barn, and silo. A herd of Angus grazes where Wynn and Nick are fishing. Big boulders are stacked all along the creek – they are there for an upcoming stream restoration project, but they look Neolithic, like druid monuments dropped down in the middle of Wisconsin.

The flat valley bottom rises suddenly on either side to steep wooded hillsides. It's a peculiarity of the Driftless that these hillsides are in reality not hills at all but the sides of ancient eroded canyons. There's flat farm ground on top. That is why the main creek in this watershed is called Timber Coulee. Because this is not a valley between hills, but a soft-focus canyon below a plateau.

I climb the stile and on the other side, in that deep pool, I start catching small browns, all on the dropper. When things slow down, I go upstream to the hole with the overhanging tree. Many flailing, hap-hazard casts later, I manage a nice drift in the bubbles below the tree branches. Nothing. No surprise there: the whole run was probably blown after my first couple of casts.

Upstream past a glowering momma cow, Wynn's still catching fish. As Nick joins me on shore to show me some water upstream, Wynn lands another fish and deftly releases it. It is one of those moments when it hits you hard how fast your kids are growing up. It seems just the other.

I would stand behind her and help her cast, my hand enveloping both her wrist and the rod handle. Now, at sixteen, she is nearly as tall as I am. And if she is still got some things to learn about fishing (don't we all?), she is ten times the angler I was at her age.

Nick leads me up to the next pool and spends a few minutes with me. Nothing's biting so he motions me over, ties the dropper on a foot longer tippet. I catch three respectable browns with the next three casts. "Ok," he says, "I think you're good," and goes back down to fish with Wynn. I land a few more fish from that pool and then amble upstream among the Neolithic boulders. I cast a few times into some narrow, fast water but do not catch anything. The sun's getting high, the day's getting hot, the fishing's slowing down.

Back at the cars, Nick asks if we do not mind finding our own way back to town. He needs to head in the other direction because he has an appointment to pick up a rooster. For no good reason, the idea of Nick having an appointment to pick up a rooster strikes me as hilarious. I start laughing my ass off and Wynn and Nick look at me like I've lost my mind. "It's really easy," Nick says a bit tentatively, caught off guard by my laughing, "it's just your first left and that takes you right back to the highway."

And it is easy. As we drive out of the coulee, I remind Wynn about Borgen's diner in Westby. We ate there a couple of years ago. Cherry pie to die for. "Sounds good." Wynn makes the call and we meet her sister Zara and my wife Christy a few minutes later. Spoiler alert: the cherry is just as good as I remembered, but if you ask the girls, the lemon meringue stole the show.

That evening, Zara and I are following Nick's car down a winding road in a steeply wooded, narrow hollow. Where the bottomlands of the Driftless are endless grassy fields surrounding expansive farmsteads, reaching up to wooded hillsides, the headwater valleys are narrow, steeply sided and shadowed. The road follows the path of the creek. The houses, what few there are, perch in small yards seemingly hollowed out of the hillside. There is a palpable sense of isolation and innocence in the landscape. Rabbits in the road look up at you like they have never seen a car before and saunter out of the way as you approach. Deer in their orange summer coats cock their heads and look at you, then trot off, stop, and look back again. A skunk ambles down the middle of the road like he knows he's got right-of-way. (He does.)

The valley and the twisting, curving, narrow black-top remind you more of the Ozarks or Appalachians than Wisconsin dairy country. But the fact that this back road is actually paved means we could only be in Wisconsin – because of the weight of dairy trucks, rural roads that would be gravel anywhere else are paved in Wisconsin.

Nick stops on a bridge, rolls his window down to look up and down the creek and the road, and then turns around. There is no shoulder so to turn around it's a three-point turn twice over. That's a six-point turn, right? We follow him back down the road a quarter mile or so and park.



The creek bottom glows green in the yellow evening light, sparsely wooded and grazed-down but, like most of the land we see in the Driftless, not over-grazed. We wader up, grab the rods, follow Nick along a fence line down a gentle slope and slide into the creek.

The fence goes across the creek; upstream is private property. "It's technically illegal to fence across the creek like that," Nick says, "but everybody does it. Because otherwise how are you going to keep your cows in."

For obvious reasons, Nick knows a lot about Wisconsin water laws. It's one of the few states where both the creek bottom and the water in the creek are state owned. According to Nick, it is the only state where this ownership is enshrined in the state constitution. The upshot for anglers is that if you can get into a waterway from a public access, you can fish all that water so long as you stay in the water. These laws are why this area has something like a hundred miles of publicly accessible trout fishing. And that embarrassment of riches is likely why, in three days of fishing during the June high season, we will not see a single other angler.

We duck under the fence and Zara leads off. She is casting well, straight upstream to the top of the smooth, narrow current that turns out of a riffle above. It takes her a couple of casts to hit it just right but when she does a trout takes her dropper. "Set! Set! Set!" Nick implores but by that time the fish is gone.

Zara's eighteen, not quite six feet tall, with pig-tail braids, a baseball cap, and a mouth to make a sailor blush. She says a word that rhymes with "duck" rapid-fire six times. Nick laughs. "You gotta watch that dry."

I say, "You kiss your mother with that mouth?"

"Duck off, Dad." Ah, fatherhood.

The next time she sets the hook so hard that the small, startled trout gets thrown back to the fence line behind us. Finally, she finds her rhythm and lands a few fish. I take my turn and land a couple and we decide to move up.

The creek widens into a weedy flat then turns right and straightens up against the far side of the valley. The sun's dropped behind that hillside so we are fishing in the shadows now, the pale cropped grasses and evenly spaced trees giving it a park-like feel. Zara and I trade off fishing through a couple more holes. We keep catching fish on the dropper, but there is nothing happening on the surface. Nick says there is a place downstream where the fish might be rising.

We drive down to a wide spot in the road called Cooperage, Wisconsin. The barrel factory that gave this place its name is long gone. There are two-boarded up stores from the early nineteenth century and a couple of houses that have seen better days. We pull off the road a bit beyond, where a side road leads to a bridge across the creek.

When I get out of the car, Nick looks up from his phone. "Sorry, I just got reception back and that rooster just hasn't figured out his place. He's causing so many problems." Several smart-ass comments about pecking order and, well, peckers come to mind, but I keep them to myself. This is serious business for Nick.

The landscape has opened up from the close confines of the creek's headwaters. On the other side of the bridge is an old farmstead that Nick says is the front part of a five-thousand acre parcel a lawyer recently bought for several million dollars. On one side of the barn there are six or seven deluxe deer blinds they are getting ready to put out. "Yeah," Nick says, "he kind of figures this is his little creek right here but that's not how it works." I know Nick knows his water law, but I cannot help worrying about shots across our bow from an over-entitled land-owner testing-driving one of his deluxe deer blinds

Above the bridge, fish are rising along a bubble line on the right bank. There is about an hour of daylight left so the fly is hard to see and Zara's tired. Nick reminds her to strip in line and she harrumphs in frustration not at Nick but at herself. Her casting is desultory and lazy, and Nick has to untangle her a couple of times.

When her back cast reaches four o'clock, I say, "Hey, not to be the guide but your back cast is going back pretty far." I am ready for a torrent of invective but Zara's so tired that she just says, "Ok, thanks." Nick and I both look at each other in surprise. It has only been two days, but he already knows Zara well.

I take my turn and do not have any luck, so we move up to the next pool. Zara lands a fish or two and gives me the rod. After a few casts, there is a stirring beside me and a chocolate lab puppy stares up at me from the water.

Nick: "Baby otter!"

The otter porpoises a couple times in front of me before disappearing downstream. "That's why we haven't been catching much," Nick says. "I probably won't come back here this summer. But in two years, man, the fish will be big."

For a long time, I had the old-school angler's dislike of predators – herons, otters, mergansers. Even eagles. Only recently have I gotten it through my head what Nick just implied – there is a balance to be struck between predators and prey. And in the case of trout, the result of that balance is fewer, but bigger and stronger, fish. One of the great things about the Driftless is also, arguably, one of its flaws: these creeks are absolutely packed with fish – as many as twenty-five hundred per mile in often skinny water. And there are big fish in them – but if there were fewer fish there would be more big fish.

Somehow the sight of the otter has made us all wordlessly agree that our day is done. Back down the creek, trout are rising to the bubble line where we started. But it's nearly dark and we're all beat. Zara and I head back to meet Wynn and Christy for dinner. Nick heads home to calm his seething chicken coop.

Next morning and we are fishing with Peter. Last night as we took off our waders, Nick said, "Peter guides really different from me. He's a good guide, just different." When we meet Peter in front of the fly-shop, one of the first things he says is, "Nick's a great guide but I'm a little different. Not right or wrong, but different." It was nice of them to tell us this, but we probably could have figured it out for ourselves: Peter's coiled intensity could not be more different from Nick's relaxed vibe.

Nick looks like he slept on someone's couch last night. Buzz-cut in head-to-toe camo, Peter looks like he just got back from a tour of duty with the fly-fishing Marine Corps.

Up to now the girls had been alternating morning and evening fishing with me, but this morning they are both along. We follow Peter north towards Timber Coulee. We park beside a bridge by a trickling feeder creek. Peter and the girls will fish downstream where the water widens out – I will fish just up from the bridge.

It's overcast but with no wind it's steamy and stifling. Peter tells the girls to sit tight and leads me through an open gate, past a fence-post auger haphazardly laying in the grass, down to the little

creek. There is a short section of fast, smooth water, then a riffle above it and, above that, a long glassy pool below a small waterfall. Even from where we are, we can see that fish are consistently rising.

“Ok,” Peter says, “they’re feeding right below the surface, some kind of emerger.” He opens his fly box and scans the contents intently, plucks out a couple flies and snaps the box shut. “So, I’m going to put this on and then if they don’t take that you’ll have this Parachute Adams you can try.

You will just fish the far bank all the way up, first this bubble line in this fast water and then the same side up there. Take you forty minutes. Sound good?”

Yep. And as it turns out, Peter is right about everything except the forty minutes. This little piece of water will absorb me for nearly two hours.

The past couple days we had been fishing Nick’s 5-weight graphite rods, so it takes a few minutes this morning to get the feel back with my little 3-weight bamboo. But it eventually comes, and it is perfect for this water. What is less perfect is I cannot see the fly to save my life. Even with the glasses I so desperately need I don’t think I’d be able to see it. With the overcast sky and the reflection of the creek bank the water’s black. The fly is both black and underwater. I am not getting any action in any case, so after a while I tie on the Adams.

I fish up the fast section again with the new fly – nothing – and then start carefully working my way up the upper section, casting to rising fish. Nothing takes but I am landing the line lightly enough that the pool isn’t spooked, and fish keep rising.

I keep casting. I can see the fly, which is great. But it is not attracting any attention from the fish. I take a couple steps upstream and slowly extend my casts way up to the top of the pool, finally landing the fly right at the base of the small waterfall. Rising fish all around, good drifts over rising fish, zero takes. Time to change

Back down by the bridge, I sit on the grass and put Peter’s emerger back on. You know all that stuff I said about the perfect, tidy Wisconsin farmsteads? I guess these folks did not get the memo. Pretty rude of me to say, since my ass is parked on their land. Up by the mirror water, a bunch of old cinder blocks cascade down into the creek.

On the far shore there is a random stack of rusty pipe and concrete and a giant cabin cruiser pontoon boat that hasn’t seen a lake in twenty years. Thank God the overgrown, late-seventies Corvette is made of fiberglass. Otherwise it long-since would have rusted away. The gate we came through looks like it’s been run over several times and the fences are patched-together and sagging. Then there is that auger laying in the middle of the pasture.

A guy walking across the bridge calls down to me: “There’s a bunch down here!” He cannot see the grate that makes it impossible to cast to that water.

With the emerger back on, I fish through the fast water pretty quickly. No takers.

Up in the flat water fish still dimple the surface, from right up by the waterfall at the top all along the far side, past the cascading cinder blocks down to a patch of weeds that’s only a few yards

in front of me. I cast this side of the weeds. I still cannot see the fly as it floats down in the imperceptible current, so when a fish rises it takes me a half second too long to realize it's after my fly. I miss the set.

In the next half hour, I will miss more hook sets, but I'll also cast to and land rising fish all the way up this dinky, wonderful little pool. It is all browns, most are small, but up at the top of the pool, where the water pours in from above, I land two or three around eleven or twelve inches. Not monsters, but you'd have to be pretty jaded not to love sight casting to wild browns with an invisible dry fly on a perfectly clear creek next to a great jumbled yard of rusty equipment, derelict building materials and recreational vehicles in various states of disrepair. Ok maybe this last bit could be left out. And in most places in the Driftless, it is.

After a while, I head downstream where I figure Peter and the girls must have gone. At first the stream gets wide and flat and eroded, without much structure. I put a fly down in a few spots that do not exactly look good, but less bad than the water above and below. On down past a couple of low waterfalls the water starts to look a lot better and I cast into a dark, flat run. A small fish jumps and misses my fly. I try a few more times with no luck.

Pretty soon here come Peter and the girls through the hay field. They had a good morning, caught some fish. Part way back to the cars, Peter stops us and insists on taking our picture. The girls do not love the idea – kids these days hate the notion of any image of themselves they don't curate and control. But they indulge Peter and me, and the image from that morning, the blowing grasses in the broad creek bottom, the distant dark wooded slopes, the brooding grey sky, the great drift-wood log beside us and dairy barns behind us, will end up in a frame on my desk.

After we take off our waders and take down our rods, I hold out the care-worn emerger for Peter to see. "I don't know," I say. "Six or eight fish for sure. Maybe more." He grins and his predator's eyes burn. I give him back the Adams, keep the emerger and he heads off as we get everything back into the car.

Heading back into town, we all agree nothing would hit the spot quite like a slice of cherry pie. Unless it's lemon meringue. Oh, hell why choose: there is three of us and Christy will meet us and make it four.

Master the Midge – become a better Fly Fisher by Kirk Deeter

Want to make a New Year's resolution that will absolutely, positively turn you into a better fly fisher in 2021? I have one: Increase your knowledge of midges and midge fishing, and you will catch more trout, guaranteed

Why? Well, for starters, midges (most of which are in the family Chironomidae) account for over half of the bugs in the water you're likely fishing... lakes, rivers, ponds, streams... fast current, slow current, no current... all included. So, trout are naturally keyed into eating them. Midges are also all-season, all-weather bugs. If you go fishing now (and through the winter), odds are, you are not going to find any grasshoppers on the banks, and rarely will you find mayflies hatching, but you will find midges.

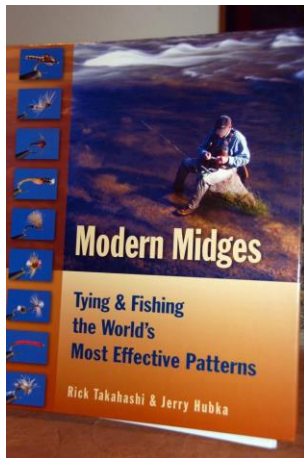
In fact, odds are, wherever you go fishing, whenever, midges are obvious, right in front of your nose... all those little "flecks" flying around above the river? Midges. Well, "obvious" maybe is not the best word, because midges are tiny little suckers...but that is not always the case. Midges can be larger than you think. They are grouped together because of their shape (particularly wing shape), not necessarily their size.

I often get asked, "How do you fish a size #24 midge dry fly? I can't even thread the tippet through the eye of the fly."

My answer is... I do not fish size #24 midge dry flies. My favourite midge fly is a zebra midge, which I tie myself with a tungsten bead, using black thread and thin silver wire (only three ingredients) on a size #16 scud hook. I think the zebra midge, made popular in the mayfly-free zone of Lees Ferry in Arizona, is one of the easiest flies to tie, and certainly one of the five deadliest bugs in my box. I do not leave home without them.

When I lake-fish, rarely will I go without some midge in some form, at least part of the time. When I am fishing tandem nymphs in technical water, a midge (like a Black Beauty) is almost always in the mix.

I could go on and on. The bottom line is, learning basic nymph fishing is like going to elementary school. If you want a PhD, it is time to get focused on midges.



For my money, the best book on midges is Modern Midges: Tying and Fishing the World's Most Effective Patterns, by Rick Takahashi and Jerry Hubka.

"Tak" and Jerry are in their own league on this topic, and their beautiful book not only talks about why, where and how to fish midges, it also includes a fantastic library of midge patterns to keep near your tying bench. I highly recommend it



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.

Marlborough's plan to honour its mighty Wairau River by Tracey Neal

The Wairau River flows from its source in the Southern Alps, to Cook Strait 170 kilometres away. It's a lifeblood of Marlborough yet its story beyond being a source of water is not widely known.



A plan is now underway to create a regional park along its banks from the confluence of the Waihopai River down to its exit at Te Koko-o-Kupe/Cloudy Bay.

It would be a first of its kind for Marlborough and aimed to honour the river as a taonga for Māori, while securing its future as a major regional resource.

Māori history lecturer Peter Meihana grew up swimming in the Wairau's swift currents. "The name itself is actually ngā wai-rau o Ruatere - or the labyrinth of waterways.

"The Wairau is not just the main body of water that runs to the sea, it also includes all the tributaries that feed the river, and also refers to the springs that are right throughout the plains.

It also tells an almost 800-year-old story. "So, the river acts as a mnemonic for all our oral traditions - who our people were, where we came from ... all those stories are embedded in the landscapes.

"If it wasn't for the river people wouldn't have settled here in 1280 AD." Dr Meihana said the drawcard was Moa, which were themselves drawn to the abundant plains.

The Marlborough Landscape Group, set up in 2003 to guide the council on landscape matters, was driving development of the park. One of its aims was to maintain iwi customs and spiritual values.

Te Rūnanga a Rangitāne o Wairau represented iwi on regional land issues, and its general manager Nick Chin said the park would offer a glimpse into the past. The river and its associated wetlands and lagoons were once abundant with eels and birds, while the margins provided flax and timber.

"It would have been covered by a kahikatea broadleaf forest, the lagoons would have been teeming with wildlife, shellfish and birds. "The opportunity with this park is to give people a flavour of what it once looked like."

Chin, who was also a botanist, hoped to see re-vegetation of traditional plants. "One way to popularise parks is to make them relevant to people. "For us to have, say, a rare plant collection or a medicinal plant collection would add interest to a regional park."

The Wairau was also a lifeblood for the region, but it was ailing, and less water now replenished it.

Marlborough District Council groundwater scientist Peter Davidson said aquifer levels had dropped by a metre since 1973. The Wairau was one of the east coast's largest braided rivers and was losing water needed to re-charge aquifers, which in turn supplied Marlborough's drinking water and irrigation needs, Davidson said.

A clue lay with climate change, but other things were at play.

Since 1861 a succession of river control works and stop-banks had altered the channels and flow of the river. The last major flood was in July 1983, when stop-banks were breached in Tuamarina, causing significant damage, including the loss of homes and stock.

"We've trained the river over the last 60 years to stop the Wairau Plain becoming flooded; we keep the soil moistures down so we can farm the flats. "We got a big investigation programme going on run by Lincoln Agritech and involving a lot of different people from around the world," Davidson said.

Today, the Wairau was a place to sit and contemplate the views up the valley, walk the dog, ride a mountain bike, go for a swim, ride a horse, or catch a fish. The council's deputy mayor Nadine Taylor said the river meant different things to different people, but fundamentally it remained a connector from the mountains to the sea, and to the past.

"We know how valuable the river is to us here, in the Wairau Valley and in Blenheim.

"We know how many users value it so it's time to bring all of those components together, to understand them in a holistic sense, and also to talk to our community about what the future of the river looks like for us."

The proposal for the Wairau River Regional Park came from the community and councillors were keen to have it on the table. "We've allocated a budget for it, and asked staff to draft up what the first steps might be before asking for community input."

Taylor said the council held a lot of data on the river.

"It's one of the most highly managed rivers in the South Island, it's been managed for over 150 years in terms of its flood works and protection, so we're going to bring all of that together along with community aspirations around walking, cycling and recreation.

"From there we'll go out to the community and go, 'right, this is what we do now - what's next for the river?'"

Dr Meihana said the project could have broader meaning than restoration of the Wairau. "If people could see that, that could lift the bar - this is what we can achieve, let's build on that, so subsequent generations might say: 'This is a prototype for something new'."

Lost Fishing Friends by Domenick Swentosky



They all come and go. The friends we love eventually leave.

Some find jobs across the country, moving hundreds of miles away, with a promise to keep in touch or return with frequency, to rekindle old fishing memories and cast again to all the familiar haunts. But such words are spoken with a trailing glance, knowing that the best of intentions will be bested by reality and responsibility.

Some fishing friends burn out with trout fishing altogether, finding other interests that leave the fly rod unattended in the rafters of a dim, dusty garage. And with limited hours in this life, friendships lacking a common connection fall apart.

Others are married. And the temperament of their spouse dictates river time. All of my best and frequent fishing partners have wives who are unconditionally happy to see their husbands enjoy the water — or they are single.

Combine any relationship's average responsibilities with a few kids, and the free time to fish is trimmed down to almost nothing. Because prioritizing what others consider a hobby comes with an associated guilt that most cannot overcome. So fishing, and the accompanying friendships, are lost.

Some fishing friends pass into the afterlife. And they leave their legacy within our own fishing styles. We carry their knowledge, their habits, and their best ideas along the stream.

The lost friendship transforms a river bend — the one with the ancient and hollowed-out sycamore — into an active tombstone. The towering tree with the undercut bank now becomes a place to remember shared moments of casting into shaded, cool waters, where the ghosts of laughter and fond companionship persists.

As I stand midstream, facing this wooden memorial, engulfed by water waist deep and watching rising trout near the edge, I remember waiting through a thunderstorm with my friend — just twenty feet up on that bank. I feel the melancholy memory of a spinner fall at dusk that wouldn't quit — when all the trout, for just once, rose to meet our flies on the surface for what seemed like hours into the darkness. Who knows how long it was? Because the minutes, shared with a best friend on our favourite river, were timeless.

And now, on this perfect summer evening, with the humidity cleaned up and pushed away by a northern wind through the canyon, these memories are as starkly tangible as ever — even after twenty years. And though the fish will never rise with such eagerness again, the heart of a friendship, born through water and built upon thousands of shared waves, remains strong.

They all come and go.



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Since the last newsletter the breeding Kiwi's at Nag Manu have been busy and the male Kiwi is sitting on an egg which at this stage is actively growing chick, would recommend you have a chat to Hugh about his Kiwi Encounter.

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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