

# “Ripples”

The Official publication of the Southland Fly Fishing Club. The club was founded in 1974

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[www.southlandflyfishingclub.org.nz](http://www.southlandflyfishingclub.org.nz)



# Southland Fly Fishing Club



## Editors Choice Tippets

### STREAM CLEAN-UP AIMS TO 'TEMPT' TROUT BACK

Sixty-five tonnes of accumulated silt has been blasted out of a Christchurch stream in an effort to entice trout back to breed, and improve the habitat for other aquatic life. Recently North Canterbury Fish & Game staff spent two weeks co-ordinating the removal of sediment from the Wairarapa Stream in western Christchurch. The stream is one of the Avon River's most important tributaries. The operation removed silt which had accumulated over the years from storm-water drains flowing into the once-pristine stream. The goal was to make the stream suitable for trout to spawn in, and habitable by other aquatic life. "Silt layers on top of the stream gravels had smothered the invertebrates that live in the stream bed, and by removing the sediment aquatic life has the chance to prosper again," says Fish & Game Officer Emily Arthur-Moore. "Various techniques were used during the two weeks, including water jet blasters, diggers and a specialised piece of equipment called a 'sand wand,' Ms Arthur-Moore says. Support was given to the project by the Christchurch City Council, Environment Canterbury and Nelson-based dredging and water treatment consultants Southwater, who also provided various pumps, hoses and dosing equipment 'gratis'. Monitoring was carried out throughout the project to assess levels of sediment going downstream. "Large amounts of rubbish were also removed during the process, mainly broken glass and crockery but also items of footwear, batteries and plastic." "I'm overwhelmed by the anglers and others who volunteered and who put in many long hours make the project work" Ms Arthur-Moore says. One volunteer was Tony Findlay, who grew up in the area 50 years ago "He recalled being able to drink the stream water from the three springs that once fed the stream bed that he was working in, 'not that you would do that now,' he told us." The stream will be monitored over the coming years to see if the improved habitat increases the diversity of invertebrates, which trout predate on. Also of interest is the degree that silt may return to cover the gravels. Ms Arthur-Moore says it's hoped the techniques and knowledge gained from the project can be applied in other enhancement projects around the region.



Cover Photo: Johnny Mauchline



### Waspi Fly Tying Cement

I love this stuff. It gives a deep, penetrating and durable gloss finish. It is used both as a foundation and for finishing heads on all types of flies.

Penetrating threads fast and quick drying with minimum build up for foundation and finishing. Available in Clear, Red and Black from:

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Excellent fly and photograph by Sergio Baiguera

"People get the Politicians and fishing tackle they deserve."

John Gierach

## Fishing Report by Redtag



Well after a less than reasonable start to the season weather-wise the last month has been an improvement even though high winds have predominated. The river has come good and has been below datum level which is always excellent as it opens up water that was unfishable before.

Mayfly hatches have been pretty consistent but light and willow grubs are evident especially in warm conditions with wind. Some excellent fishing in the early afternoons and evenings.



Further afield I visited North Otago over the Xmas period and had some awesome fishing on rivers and lakes for both Rainbows and Browns. Rainbows were especially ballistic once caught going into the backing before you know it.

Willow grubbers were out in force in the right conditions and proved to be a challenge but having the right fly makes all the difference for these super selective feeders which in turn makes all the difference to having a successful day on the water. Presentation is the ultimate key of course and casting the fly at the most opportune moment is imperative to success.



On a more sombre note my good friend and local fly fishing aficionada Colin Meikle died recently. It was a pleasure and a privilege to be in his company and the knowledge he instilled in me of local waters and fly patterns will never be forgotten.

I now have been handed the key to the farm gate and access to his beat which I will hold dearly.

And so the river of life flows on and is ever changing.

*Redtag*





## FISHING THE HATCHING

# Blue Winged Olive

The Blue Winged Olive is a well-known mayfly amongst fly fishermen. It is relatively insensitive to pollution, and can be found in many rivers. When they hatch, they often get the attention from larger trout, which in turn can get very selective. A perfect challenge for the fly fisherman.

By Sverre T.H. Solgård

*The Ephemera ignita has a hard time leaving its nymph skin as it hatches into the adult dun. This one lost a leg in the effort.*



### Under the bridge

There are deep scratch marks on the local concrete bridge pillar. The bridge crosses one of the many trout rivers in Norway. The bridge pillar is a good place to look for insect activity and signs of mayfly hatches. Mayfly duns tend to rest here before they molt their skins, turn into spinners and join the others in night-life sex activities. Mayfly skins indicate possibilities for dry fly fishing.

The scratch marks on the pillars are from tree trunks and rocks brought downstream in a flood a few years ago. The bridge rises 5-6 meters above the river, but during a period of heavy rain and snow melting, water level rose to a record high, and flooded the bridge. It was hammered with rocks, trees and debris. Luckily, the bridge survived, but the scars remain on the pillars and in the surrounding terrain.

There were floods like this one three years in a row, and the river has changed. River beds have been rearranged. Quite a few trees along the banks are gone. Many of the aquatic plants have been washed away. Insect life has changed as well. There used to be large amounts of Summer Mayflies here, the *Siphonurus aestivalis*, but now they are all gone. Not a single one can be found on the bridge pillars. But even if the Summer Mayflies are gone, trout still thrive here feeding on something else. Hopefully, the Summer Mayfly will reappear once again when things have settled.

### Water quality

Water quality in this part of the river is worse than it appears to the eye. Under normal conditions the river is quite clear



*A dark brown emerger is a good place to start in nearly any situation. It could imitate almost anything floating in the surface film.*

and has areas with moss and aquatic plants. Quite idyllic. Recent environmental reports say something else, though. Only pollution-resilient insects dominate here; The Blue Winged Olive, midges and a few caddis. And there are no Gammarus. The trout flesh is pale white. But the fish is big, some individuals up to 3,5kgs and in good condition, so they are excellent targets to fly fishermen.

### Discerning trout

These large trout are very picky. They are extremely selective at times, and fishing can be quite mind-boggling. They are inactive mid-day and the river has no signs of life during the day. It is only in the morning hours and late at night, these fish are active. And they have such obscure feeding manners, they are very hard to spot. Sometimes they feed only

a few feet from the shore, beneath overhanging trees, with a rise barely visible. The casual fisherman, will never succeed here. Lures and spoons will not work, as these fish are extremely shy and only eat insects. Only a very few fishermen come here. It is a lonely, but exciting place to fish.



### Flat surface

These fish are often very selectively feeding on Blue Winged Olives, *Ephemereilla ignita* duns. They place themselves close to shore, on flat surfaces where they have full control of their surroundings. The pale wings on the mayfly duns are highly visible from a distance, and are easily spotted by trout. Blue Winged Olives have a hard time leaving their nymph skins as they hatch, and after they leave the skin they often sit on the surface for a long time. These trout focus on tiny wiggling emergers fighting their way out of their skins, floating in the surface film, drifting long distances. Matching the hatch can be very difficult

for the fly fisherman to achieve. The visual properties of the insect are easily imitated with regular tying techniques, but its behavior at the end of the leader is harder to imitate. It requires drifts without any microdrag, on flat surfaces very close to the shore. Not to mention the wiggling behavior of the fly.

### Solutions

The approach that works best is a very delicate, totally drag free presentation with a long tippet. An upstream reach cast with a limp intermediate tippet is the way to go. But before casting that delicate presentation, one must wait. Waiting is what this game is all about.

Sitting by the river shore and watching carefully for rising fish. It is a good idea to bring polaroid glasses, food, coffee and toys, such as a camera, to make time fly faster. Nothing happens most of the time. Sitting alone by a dead river for hours is not for everyone. But just when it's about time to give up in the evening, go home and have a nice dinner and some cold beer, that's when things happen. And when it does, there is no time to eat or drink. Alcohol and delicate fly fishing at night do not mix.

### Leader

For this kind of fishing, one needs limp tippets that collapse in coils on the



The *E. ignita* is tiny, only 6-9mm long. The YKK zipper looks like a crevasse compared.



### Emerger

**Hook:** Hanak H390BL #16  
**Body:** Pheasant tail dyed brown  
**Thorax:** Dark brown dubbing  
**Wing post:** Dark dun Aero Dry  
**Hackle:** Coachman brown



A trout in ankle deep water. It decided not to take the bright winged *E. ignita* surfing above its head. This fish was 1,4kg and was finally caught on an emerger.



surface to avoid micro drag. A leader that turns over the fly perfectly, leaving the leader in a nice straight line on the surface, does not work. The advantage of collapsing leaders is described in Gary LaFontaine's "The Dry Fly". He ties a knotted leader from scratch, but it is a good idea to start with a regular tapered 9 foot nylon leader with a 5x tip. Then cut off the 5x tip, and replace it with a 4 foot 5x fluorocarbon tippet. The long level tippet will collapse in curves, and with an upstream reach cast it makes the long drag-less drifts easier to achieve.

### Flies

Dark brown emergers #16 and olive parachute dry flies #16 usually work. There is no need to tie them fancy or use exotic tying techniques. It is more important to focus on tying with a minimum of materials. The insects are tiny, so the overall impression of the fly needs to be slim and small. Try to use the least amount of tying thread and dubbing. A bulky fly will not look right on the water surface along with the other naturals.

### Midge

The Blue Winged olives have bright, highly visible wings. Although tiny, they are easy to spot on the surface. When the insects appear in high numbers and fish rise steadily, it is easy to assume that Blue Winged Olives is what they eat. But that is not always the case. If they rise steadily, but refuse to take the imitations, it is very likely they eat midge instead. Blue Winged Olives and midge live in the same habitat and hatch at the same time. In other words, there might be a masked hatch going on. The masking hatch is well described in "Fly



*Ironically, the solution is often a #18 black midge during E. ignita hatches. The bright Blue Winged Olive steals the attention from a less visible midge hatch.*

Fishing Strategy" by Swisher/Richards: "The masking hatch occurs when the presence of a larger, more brightly colored insect effectively masks the presence of a much smaller, darker insect, which is almost imperceptible in the flow". That sentence changed everything for me when I first applied it. My best tip is

therefore: if Blue Winged Olive imitations don't work during a hatch, or any other mayfly hatch for that matter, tie on a black #20-18 midge. Even if you don't see midge on the surface, just do it. A leap of faith perhaps, but it might just save you from despair. A black parachute dry fly will often do the trick.







**Parachute dry fly**

- Hook:** Hanak H130BL #16
- Tail:** Coq de Leon Pardo
- Body:** Superfine Brown Olive
- Hackle:** Barred dark ginger
- Wing:** TMC Aero Dry Wing



*The E. ignita dun has highly visible pale wings. Although a small insect, only 6-9mm long, it can easily be seen from a distance.*





## Anglers In River Get Dumped On With 1080 'Hailstones'

New Zealand trout fishing guide Scott Murray was fishing the South Island West Coast's Mohikinui River with guests in early December when it started hailing 1080 poison pellets.

"It was like big hail drops hitting the water around us," said Scott who is a co-owner of River Haven Lodge near Murchison.

Scott Murray and a 91-year-old Californian client and nephew had just landed from their helicopter in the Mohikinui valley when they saw other choppers carrying buckets loaded with 1080 green pellets. Soon after, the toxic hail storm happened.

The 1080 drop was carried out jointly by OSPRI who are charged with possum control work for combating bovine tuberculosis (Tb) and the Department of Conservation who aim to kill rats as part of its "Battle for Our Birds" predator control programme.

The upper reaches of the Mohikinui split into the north and south branches both being wilderness in character. By chance in the Mohikinui on the same day as Scott Murray was Zane Mirfin, a Nelson guide, and two guests. Zane Mirfin's Californian client was incredulous when Zane explained what the aerial top-dressing with 1080 pellets was about.

Scott and Zane were incensed while both their international fishing guests were startled and almost speechless. Later Scott Murray said his elderly guest was so shocked he was debating whether or not to return to New Zealand in the future. The clients saw New Zealand's much vaunted "clean and green" branding for exports and tourism as in tatters due to a lack of credibility.

"It's a bad, bad advertisement for New Zealand. Overseas New Zealand's 1080 madness is becoming increasingly known and a growing number are shocked at New Zealand dangerous obsession and use of 1080 and poisons generally. It makes me quite angry just thinking about it," said Scott.

Despite windy conditions the contracted helicopters continued to spray poison pellets around the valley and into the river..

Both Zane Mirfin and Scott Murray highlighted the lack of justification for the haphazard spreading of the poison pellets.

Zane Mirfin described the 1080 bombardment as "a waste of taxpayer money and ecologically damaging".

"It's a sheer waste of taxpayer funds on a largely futile exercise, plus irreparable damage is done to New Zealand clean-and-green, 100% pure marketing brand."

He described the "Battle for the Birds" programme as "a bureaucratic exercise in state-funded rodent enhancement."

After 1080 drops, within a few years, fast breeding, multi-litter bearing rats explode in numbers with the impetus carrying numbers to over three times pre-poisoning levels. As for bovine Tb, last year The Minister of Primary Industries admitted in Parliament that over 9800 possums autopsied revealed nil Tb infection. New Zealand has low Tb infection rates in cattle, well below international classification percentage for declaring a Tb-free status.

**Footnotes:** (a) 1080 was first developed as an insecticide about 1927 but was found to kill birds and animals. Critics label it as an "ecosystem poison".

<http://www.nzffa.net>



Scott Murray in the Mohikinui River with 1080 pellets that fell from the sky on his American guests and him and into the river.



## From the President by Dave Harris

The fishing season continues to be challenging with cold wet and windy conditions.

Between Christmas and New Year I fished the Oreti River above Mossburn, two different places on three different days. The first day was quite difficult as it was overcast and very windy, straight down the river. This made both spotting and casting difficult. However I did spot a few fish and they seemed quite keen on the black blowfly that I tied for the Club fly tying competition. (See May 2016 Ripples for instructions). A couple of days later I was back in the same area and again it was windy, but this time it was up the river and not quite as strong. There was also a bit of sun now and then and that made spotting a little bit easier. However the fish would not look at the blowfly, they only seemed to be interested in nymphs. The following day I was a little further up in better conditions and once again the fish seemed pretty keen on the blowfly, I just couldn't land them. What I don't understand is why the fish would look at the dry fly some days and not others. Clearly there was something in the conditions that made them behave differently. It could have been temperature, atmospheric pressure etc but as I don't have anything to measure these I don't know what it was.

We have a few things coming up. First of all we have our **annual Fly Fishing Course on January 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>**. This is before our next meeting and we will need some helpers for this course, both on the Saturday afternoon at James Hargest College for the casting and then again on Sunday at Wyndham on the river from 9:00am. If you are available give Chris McDonald a ring and let him know so he knows who will be there and so he can check we have enough helpers. We will have David Linklater from the Concerned Resident Anglers Group along to speak to us at the January meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> January. This group is concerned at the increasing number of overseas anglers visiting New Zealand and the pressure they put on the rivers. Finally on this list there is the trip to Lake Alexandrina on the last weekend in February as mentioned in the December Ripples. Let me know (03 2156068) if you are a starter for this trip. At present there are only two of us on the list.

## Freeze Dried Food Orders

Les will be doing a bulk Freeze Dried food order at the next monthly meeting. If you are interested please email Les and he will send you an order form.

[Les.Ladbrook@sdhb.govt.nz](mailto:Les.Ladbrook@sdhb.govt.nz)



## Name This Stream Competition

One correct answer last month. Maurice Rodway correctly identified the Upukerora River. The picture this month is by Johnny Mauchline. You need to identify the river and the exact location. Answers by email only please to [info@eis.co.nz](mailto:info@eis.co.nz) Correct answers will be placed in a draw for a \$10 Hunting & Fishing voucher sponsored by EIS. If you have a photo of a Southland stream you would like to include in the competition please email the Editor.





## Coming Events

(MM=Monthly Meeting, CM = Committee Meeting)

15th Jan		Club Day Trip, meet at Fish & Game – 7am
17th Jan		Mid-week trip
17th Jan		On the River, Tuesday straight after work, Coal Pit Rd
28/29th Jan		Fly Fishing course run by Mike Weddell from Mosgiel.
31st Jan	[MM]	
7th Feb	(CM)	Fly Tying
12th Feb		Club Day Trip, meet at Fish & Game - 7am
17-20th Feb		Lake Alexandrina Trip—contact Dave Harris for information

## Club Contacts

- Address **Southland Fly Fishing Club, PO Box 1689, Invercargill, New Zealand**
- Website [www.southlandflyfishingclub.org.nz](http://www.southlandflyfishingclub.org.nz)
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*Items for publication must be submitted to the editor, prior to the 10th of the month*
- Librarian Simon Budd
- Lodge Custodian Dave Murphy, 35 Brown Road, Invercargill [dmurphy@southnet.co.nz](mailto:dmurphy@southnet.co.nz) (03 230 4698) or (0276752324)

## Club items for sale

Metal Badges \$15 ea.



Cloth Patches \$12 ea.



## Club Meetings

The club meets at 7:30pm on the last Tuesday of each month (except December) at the Fish & Game building, 17 Eye Street, Invercargill (just off Clyde Street). [The February meeting is on the river.](#)

Executive Committee meets on the first Tuesday of the month following the general meeting, except for Dec/Jan, includes fly tying, so come along and bring your gear if you want help with a fly—all members welcome.

## Club Resources

The club has an extensive library of Books and Videos, contact the Librarian

A blow up Rubber Boat and a set of five Radio's, which can be borrowed by club members, contact Les Ladbrook.

## Club Sponsors



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