

# “Ripples”

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

February 2020



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



# Southland Fly Fishing Club

## President's Report by Dave

Well, not much to report this month. As you will all have noticed the weather and river conditions have not been great for fishing. I have also had a couple of weekends motor racing so this has taken up most of my time, especially trying to keep the car going. When I check my notebook I find there have been no entries since my last President's report.

The Fly Fishing Course was relatively poorly supported and there were few fish caught during the second day. The Mataura was low and quite warm and this will have affected the fish as they don't feed in warmer water. Mike, Chris, Julie and myself headed out to the Mataura on the Saturday night of the course but only Mike landed fish, 3 in all. I managed to hook three but none came to the net. One of these fish felt a bit different and I am reasonably sure it was foul hooked.

Since the course I have managed two days out, one on the Club Day on February 9<sup>th</sup> (see report P6) and another a couple of days later. Of course, both of these trips were post flooding and conditions were not really suited to fly fishing but we have to give it a go. On the second trip I fished a small stream but only saw 2 fish and only fished to one. It wasn't interested in what I offered. I then moved to one of the main rivers and spotted four fish but only one before it saw me. Once again, no interest. Once the sun disappeared behind some cloud there was no hope of seeing anything so I headed home empty handed.

I have a trip planned away for 4 days and hopefully I will find some fish on that trip.

Don't forget the February Meeting is on the river and Chris will be cooking a barbeque. If you are coming to the barbeque you need to let Chris (027 423 7016) know so he can get the correct quantity of supplies.

On a totally different theme, at the last Southland Fish & Game Meeting I was elected to represent Southland on the New Zealand Fish & Game Council. I have a few things I would like to sort out and this will give me more opportunity to try and sort these out. Unfortunately, I will only be one voice out of 12 so it may be hard to promote some of the changes that I see as being needed.

## From the Editor

In this issue of Ripples you will find an article by Rex Gibson. He writes for several Club newsletters and will provide me with copy from time to time. I have the option of using or leaving it out. Rex is from Canterbury and is a member of the Federation of Freshwater Anglers and the North Canterbury Fish & Game Council. Hopefully you will enjoy his articles.

You will also note that there are no articles or photos from Club members in this Ripples. Please try and see if you can write something about your fishing exploits as it will be very boring if I am the only one writing for the Ripples.

## February Meeting—On the River

The Club February Meeting will be "on the river" at the Coal Pit Road access between Edendale and Wyndham. Chris will be serving a barbeque dinner at about 6:00pm. If you are coming let Chris know on 027 423 7016 so he can cater for you.

Hopefully the river will be in good condition and we will be able to catch some fish as the evening wears on.

## Cover Photo by Dave

Chris Cowie and Chris McDonald with a brown caught by Chris Cowie on this year's Fly Fishing Course.

## Fly Fishing Course by Dave



Brendon presenting Chris Cowie with a fly fishing vest.

We had our annual Fly Fishing Course on the last weekend of January. Unfortunately we only attracted eight participants this year and two of those were repeats. The course took its usual format with the classroom part on Saturday morning and part of Saturday afternoon. We then adjourned to James Hargest College for the casting training. The casting went pretty well with all participants looking like they would be able to cast well enough to catch something on the river.

Once on the river on Sunday the casting looked pretty good and a couple of fish were landed but they were few and far between. The fish were almost certainly there but warm conditions probably discouraged them from feeding.

I would like to thank those who helped with the course and our course sponsors, Invercargill Hunting & Fishing and Manic Tackle. Brendon from Invercargill Hunting and Fishing came down with some goodies for all course members and a fly fishing vest which was won by Chris Cowie. He gave us a run down on some of the new products they have in store.

Hopefully those that took part enjoyed the course.



Julie and Chris helping out two of the course participants with their casting.

## Fishy Finances by Rex N. Gibson

Legend tells us that Maui pulled a fish from the sea whilst on his Waka; the South Island Te Waka a Maui (the canoe of Maui). That fish was named Te Ika a Maui (the fish of Maui). It was the North Island. The usual version gives Wellington harbour as its mouth. My Koro always said that Hawkes Bay was the mouth, Mahia Peninsula its tooth, and Wellington its anus. He was reflecting his disdain for what came out of Wellington.

Today, in fishery terms that fish is pulling the Waka under and Maui needs some help from his mainland brothers. The North Island Fish and Game Councils are draining the coffers of South Island Fish and Game licence holders, and the New Zealand Council and Wellington office are aiding and abetting the plundering.

In the 1830's Te Rauparaha and 'friends' caused havoc in Kaikoura and North Canterbury as they plundered the Pounamu resources there. Their 1830's greenstone is equivalent to today's licence money. Just as Tuhawai-ki (Bloody Jack) and Tairaroa rallied their southern warriors, came north, and twice soundly thrashed the North Islanders, thus sending them back across Te Moana o Raukawa (Cook Strait) permanently, mainlanders must consider forceful action.

Currently the South Island licence sales supply 66.6% of Fish and Game's annual income (\$10.973million). However the mainland's six regional F & G councils receive just 38.9% of the national income to administer the requirements of their licence holders.

The "Head Office" is allocated \$2.74m, or 24.97% of the year's income. All regions receive allocations which include "top ups" totalling of over \$786,000 (greater than income) for three North Island councils, whilst one South Island region, the West Coast gets an extra \$104,630. Two North Island regions, Northland and Taranaki, which lack the West Coast's excuse of the Southern Alps geographical barrier, only collect about 10% of either North Canterbury's, Central South Island's, Southland's or Otago's incomes. Despite this they have an equal status around the allocation table.

The system is basically simple. Regions sell licences. The money goes into head office as "a Levy" (or tax?). By a system traditionally known as "horse trading" it is allocated back to regions. There is talk of a "formula" but it is as elusive as the Ranfurly Shield has been in Buller. It is significantly influenced by the managers, rather than the elected councillors. The "formula" is reported to me by one sage as being something written in the deep dark past and based on the distribution of anglers in the days of tweed suits, cane rods and pipe smoking fishermen. Smoke and mirrors also comes to mind. Who would know?

Allocations to the regions are thus bizarrely based on "days gone by". Those regions where fishing and duck hunting are growing, licence incomes are significantly under-resourced while declining regions are living off the spoils of past glories.

The funding allocation back to the main South Island regions works out as follows; the figures are expressed as a percentage of the income collected:

- Southland 55.1%
- Otago 50.0%
- Central South Island 48.4%
- North Canterbury 50.5%

There seems to some consistency here. Their levy is about half their income. These are the regions with the greatest angler usage of their fisheries.

It is worth a comparison with the returns to the major North Island regions:

- Wellington 134.5%
- Eastern 83.99%
- Auckland/Waikato 87.2%
- Hawkes Bay 91.7%

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Fishy Finances (cont)

Their levy is averaging just a couple of percent. Go figure! With the smaller regions the discrepancy is even greater. We have to seriously ask if regions that have less than 10% of the licence holders of, say Otago, should carry a governance and management structure that parallels Otago (or any of the other major South Island regions). Remember that they also have an equally weighted seat around the table at the National Council. The word "amalgamation" comes to mind.

There is no doubt where much of the South Island Council funding is going North!!!! And I do just mean the "Head Office". Their 25% is also worth further scrutiny at some point. "Head Office" uses more of licence holders' subscriptions than the five smaller regions combined, or the largest two combined.

The southern regional councils are grappling a salmon fishery crisis. The waterways of the Marlborough, Canterbury and Mackenzie Country plains have been sold out by their regional council and the lowland rivers from Southland north have been flooded with excess phosphates and nitrates seriously altering the ecosystems of the fish; native and introduced. These regions, in particular North Canterbury, are seriously under-resourced to meet their licence holder's needs in the face of the mammoth waterways crises that they face.

As a southern licence holder it "rankles" that all of the North Island regions are being subsidised by my licence fee and that of my colleagues. Wellington, Auckland/Waikato, Eastern, Hawke's Bay, Northland and Taranaki are all "corporate beneficiaries" of mainland licence holders' monies. The only Southerners that I know who go to the North Island to fish will focus most of their effort on the Taupo/Tongariro region administered by the Department of Conservation.

The next question now is "Can, or will, Fish & Game restructure itself?" I am sure it cannot, and the vested interests of the North Island regions will strongly resist any meaningful change. Fairness will have nothing to do with it. Political or legal assistance will be needed. We should not be deterred by this prospect. After all it was political intervention that led to the three (shown to be necessary) audits of F & G councils recently carried out.

A colleague has suggested seeking a judicial review of the current funding model. He has already spoken to a Queen's Council who is certain that the Southern regions would win; the discrepancy is so glaringly unfair.

What happens in 'the other island' in the future does not currently concern me as long as they cope without a "hand-out" from the South. I suspect that it will be a case of either political or legal action before the mainland regions are resourced at a level in line with their need to tackle the extensive freshwater degradation resulting from the rampant industrial consequences of industrial dairying and with the new pressures of tourist growth on fishing waters. It is either that, or continuing with our current "subsidies" to the North island corporate welfare beneficiaries and letting the southern regions crash financially. I am confident I can predict South Island licence holders' response.

Footnote: Rex N. Gibson is an Environmental Spokesman for the NZ Federation of Freshwater Anglers. He is an ecologist and scientist and with a deep personal interest in rivers and outdoor recreation.



A nice day at Mavora.  
Top of the North Lake

## Club Day - 9th February by Dave

As is normal for a Club Day I had a look at the river levels (generally in flood) and the weather forecast. Not good for Invercargill but a lot better inland.

Up early and at Fish & Game by 7:00am in wet windy conditions. No-one else there. For me that means I can go where I like and don't have to consider other people's ability before deciding where to go. The Upper Oreti was looking not too bad as far as levels go on the ES website so that sounds good. I have been to the top beat twice this season without actually fishing it so that is where I head for.

Things start to look up as I head up the road. The rain stops at Lochiel and the road is dry by Winton and the breeze has pretty much died. The sky is looking a lot brighter ahead so maybe the forecast is right.

The Oreti looks pretty coloured at Dipton and there is quite a lot of water. Not to worry as there is a long way to go upstream.

I make a quick stop to check out a small stream on the way. Doesn't look too bad but has enough colour to make spotting difficult and there is a strong down-stream wind.

The Mavora road is pretty rough and there are cattle on the road and more coming out an open gate. They stay out of the way so all good. Finally get to the river. There is a big 5<sup>th</sup> wheel camper parked above the bridge and a single car down by the beat signs for the beats below the bridge. No-one parked next to the bridge but the water looks like pea soup. I will not be fishing the Oreti – buggar.

The only thing left is Mavora. Drive in and stop at the bottom of the South Lake. Bump into someone I know who was actually stuck further up over the flooding period. He tells me he has seen fish rising and that some Australians had been fishing the top of the South Lake the previous two days. However, the water is very coloured but I don't have much choice.

Get to the top of the lake and get ready. It is cool and there is a slight breeze but it does look like the sun may come out, which it does shortly after. The shallow areas look fishable so off I go. Anyone who has fished the top of South Mavora will know there is a lot of soft wet ground to cover and it is wetter than usual due to the high lake level. Makes for hard walking.

I finally get to a position where it looks like I can fish and soon spot a fish. Of course it is well out of casting range and not heading my way. I spot a couple more and manage to get a dry fly out. One comes up to the fly but decides it is not what it is looking for. Once a second had done this and I had seen another passing close by but right on the bottom it was time to change fly. On went a woolly buggar. I got this out to the area where I could see another fish that seemed to be taking something very aggressively. As I pull the fly back towards it, it makes another aggressive move and is hooked but I am suspicious that it is foul hooked. It must have hit the line and pulled the fly into its side where it was firmly attached. Foul hooked fish are always difficult but I finally get it to the net and set it free. Soon I see another swimming towards me and cast the fly out. It takes the fly but jumps out of the water and is gone. So is my fly.

I head back towards the car and decide to have a look along the side of the lake. Briefly see one fish but that is all. Time for lunch.

After lunch I head up to have a look at the ponds above the lake. Access was not bad but I couldn't get far as there was just too much water. No fish are seen.

I spend the rest of the afternoon talking to others and checking licences. The couple I had seen out in kayaks had a nice fish and we talked for quite a while. A Japanese gentleman arrived and he was fishing with a beautifully made bamboo rod. He headed off to where I had started in the morning. I decide it is time to head for home but manage another licence check further down the lake.

The weather still looks good as I head south but there is an ominous cloud bank on the horizon and by Winton it is blowing hard. At Lochiel I get the first spots of drizzle on the windscreen - must be close to home.

## Coming Events (MM=Monthly Meeting, CM = Committee Meeting)

25 <sup>th</sup> Feb	MM	This meeting is “On the river” --- BBQ Tea about 6pm Contact Chris 027 423 7016
26 <sup>th</sup> Feb		Mid-week Trip – Dave Harris 027 201 6722
3 <sup>th</sup> Mar	CM	Fly Tying
8 <sup>th</sup> Mar		Club Day Trip, meet at Fish & Game 7am
25 <sup>th</sup> Mar		Mid-week Trip – Dave Harris 027 201 6722
31 <sup>st</sup> Mar	MM	
7 <sup>th</sup> April	CM	Fly Tying
12 <sup>th</sup> April		Club Day Trip, meet at Fish & Game 8am

## Club Contacts

- Address **Southland Fly Fishing Club, PO Box 1689, Invercargill, New Zealand**
- Website [www.southlandflyfishingclub.org.nz](http://www.southlandflyfishingclub.org.nz)
- President Dave Harris, 30 Baxter Street Invercargill (03 215 6068) [dcharris@southnet.co.nz](mailto:dcharris@southnet.co.nz)
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- Editor Dave Harris [dcharris@southnet.co.nz](mailto:dcharris@southnet.co.nz)  
*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 St, West Invercargill, Invercargill 9810. [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 Chris McDonald.

## Club Sponsors



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