

# “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

## President's Report by Dave

Well, it has been a busy time for me over the last month. Unfortunately, that busy time only involved 9 days out on the river (or lake).

The fishing started with a two-day trip to Hukarere Station where Julie had invited Cole and I to join her at her friend Carol's place. Here we fished the Pomahaka River on both days. I hadn't been to this part of the Pomahaka before so was interested to see what it was like. The river has a reputation for big fish but they can be elusive unless you are in the right place at the right time. Our first look at the river was close to the hut that you can rent (and where we were supposed to go on a couple of Club Trips last season) and we spotted a couple of fish straight away. One was rising so Cole set off to try and catch it. He spent quite a bit of time chasing it but it wasn't at all co-operative. Julie also fished this hole and I went for a bit of a walk up the river, fishing a few likely looking spots. I had one fish rise to my dry but didn't hook up.

We then headed further up the river to fish on the next station (Julie had contacted the owners for permission) but once again we didn't get any action although the water looked really good.

The second day we headed up to the next access and drove as far up as we could go. Unfortunately, where the track ended, we were some distance from the river so headed back down. We stopped on the bridge and watched a good brown swimming back and forth under the bridge.

From here it was back to Hukarere Station and back onto the river. Once again, no action although I did spot a couple of fish.

From here Cole and I headed for Coal Pit Road for the Club BBQ. Neither of us fished here.

The following day was the mid-week trip (see report elsewhere in this Ripples), then we had to try and dry out for a planned four-day trip to Mavora the next day with Cole and Julie.

After all this time on the river I didn't get out again for over two weeks as my brother came to visit and he doesn't fish. Once he had left, I was out the next day and had a good day in perfect conditions. I saw a lot of fish and managed to land three browns between 5 and 6 ½ lbs. I don't know if I was out of practice or not but I had to work hard to get these fish to the net. All three were in very good condition so were strong fish.

I made one more trip, this time with Chris Cowie to the headwaters of one of our rivers. There wasn't much water where we started so we moved downstream a bit. We spotted a number of fish and a couple came and looked at our flies but we didn't get a take all day.

There is not much coming up on the Club calendar other than the usual day trips. However, there are still a couple of Lodge Trips this season, one at the end of April and another at the end of May. Time to start planning on how you can make these trips. Due to the Anzac Day holiday falling on a Monday the April trip will be a three-day trip.

Dave's 6½lb brown





## Guided Day out by Joel

Recently I enjoyed a day on the water with fishing guide Chris Dore after he had donated a guided day fishing to raise money for the Australian bush fire efforts. With a couple of recent days of rainfall behind us, and a reasonable forecast we headed into Western Southland looking for brown trout but also as many tips as I could get! I had said to Chris that I was more interested in the lessons he could teach me than necessarily just catching fish. He certainly didn't hold back! The morning was crisp, so the brisk 1 hour walk to get to our starting point was a great way to warm up. We arrived just before the sun broke over the mountain tops and fish activity initially appeared to be low. Within half an hour of the sun warming the valley the fish began to come out. Water levels were low at under 5 cumecs and the fish were very watchful of any movement on the banks. Movement had to be slow and we probably spent about 4 hours sight fishing the first 500 m to 1 km of stream. The fish we saw were of good size, and the first few fish I attempted for the day either spooked after an inaccurate first cast, or had rejected my nymph before I even realised a 'strike' was necessary. We came across a pool with a dark shadow lurking to the side of a rock which was bending a significant amount of current. After a few casts it was decided to add split shot to the tippet to get the nymph deeper in the swift water. This was a technique I hadn't really tried before, and after a few poor casts and tips on slowing the rod tip down, a good cast was finally landed. The fish took immediately and raced up stream with me in tow. After a few nervy moments steering the fish out from rocks and holes, Chris netted the fish for me and declared it a 9 lb beauty. A new personal best for me. I was surprised with the condition of the fish, as length-wise it would have been a 6 lb fish in rivers closer to home. Lunch has never tasted so good. Another 2 fish were landed in the day, a 7 lb (also would have been a PB) and 4 1/2 lb brown. I think for me some of the key messages from Chris were slowing down, in tricky waters the pace you set for sight fishing may have to be a lot slower than you may need in other waters. I was also impressed at the amount of fly and knot changes he made. Knots were re-tied after every fish. While fly choice didn't seem as important in terms of the type of dry or nymph being used, the size or weight was all important. Smaller dries in the slack water, lighter nymphs in the shallow runs or edges, and heavier nymphs with increased current or a lot of depth. Doesn't sound like rocket science, but really good to see in action. I think when I started fly fishing I would tie up for the day and fish those flies (and those knots) for the day unless a fish or tree took them off me. Having confidence to tie strong knots quickly and often will land a lot more fish. I would encourage you all, even long-time anglers, to support the guides over this COVID-19 time. Casting clinics on your local field, or a day's fishing on the water. Get out there, support them, learn something new.



Joel with one of the browns he caught while out with Chris Dore



Joel on the river

## Cover Photo

Joel fighting a fish while out with guide Chris Dore.

## Teviot Fishing Competition by Julie

Sunday 7th March-Teviot Survey Project.

Gerda and I were the only two brave (some would say stupid) anglers that faced the weather to represent the Southland Fly Fishing Club at the annual fishing survey this year at the Teviot river.

We headed up to camp with a friend at Hukarere before heading across to the Teviot river. Unfortunately, by the time we got to Hukarere it was too dark to fish the Pomahaka. This did not really matter given that it was even lower than when I had been up 2 weeks earlier and had no luck. I expected there would not be too many fish ready to play. Another fresh will make a big difference to the Pomehaka.

On Sunday morning we headed across to Millers Flat and up the long gravel road to the river. The cloud cover was down to the roof of the car in places but had started to clear by the time we got to the survey camp.

We received a very warm welcome from Ross and from the Teviot Angling Club who quickly got us off to fish. Ross advised that only 4 had arrived by that time. A few more arrived later.

Both of us were super enthusiastic and committed to staying the whole day, despite the rain and cold. Gerda and I had a few hook ups and losses but **no fish** to measure and weigh! We felt better when we learned the other anglers had similar results, including Ross who only got 1. In fact, a good few gave up before lunch. One other hardy committed angler, I wont mention a name, (that belongs to our club) had an oppsie ending in a swim in the river, but he bravely stayed on to finish the day. I'm hoping he did not end up with pneumonia.

The survey this year ended up being a very low count of fish compared to other years. A few experienced Teviot anglers saved the day and this was very well done as so many like us had nibbles, bumps and getaways.

Gerda and I were very grateful for the hot drink at 4.30. Despite the strong southwester and the rain, we enjoyed the day and the beautiful countryside. However, I have decided driving as a passenger on a narrow slippery gravel road with an ex-rally driver does turn me into a backseat driver.

Roll on next year and may the weather be warmer and dryer and the fish be ready to amuse us.

## Mid-Week Trip - February 24th by Dave

The February mid-week trip fell in the middle of a busy fishing week for me. Cole was staying with me so he joined me on the trip and Chris Cowie was supposed to be coming but he didn't turn up at my place so we left without him.

The weather forecast was a bit dismal with rain forecast all day and sure enough it was raining when we set off. As usual for mid-week trips we didn't plan to go far and headed for Centre Bush. I was very careful with instructions to Barbara in case Chris turned up at my place to find out where we had gone.

It was still raining when we got to the river, and it continued to rain all day. However, there was fishing to be done so we set up and headed to the river. With the dull conditions spotting was going to be difficult so in general it would be blind fishing the likely water.

I was into a small fish almost immediately and it came to the net. Shortly after this we spotted another angler coming very purposely up the river and we were soon joined by Chris who had had to sort out a few issues at home (something to do with pigs) before he could come fishing.

We didn't get a lot of action and the rain continued to fall. We had spotted a couple of fish but couldn't convince them to take anything. Finally, Cole decided he had had enough and headed back to the car. I said I would join him shortly but would fish a couple more pools. At the top of one of the pools I hooked another fish, a bit bigger than the first and, once it was released, I was ready to go but spotted another rising by some willows. By the time I got to where it was, there was no sign of it. I had a couple of casts but was wet and cold so headed back to the car.

Meanwhile Chris continued up the river but failed to get any action.

## March Club Day Trip 14th March by Daniel

Four people turned up at Fish & Game at 7am. Chris, Julie, Noel and myself and it was decided to head to the Mataura up by Riversdale. We picked Joel up at Gore on the way so that made 5.

Our first place we went for a look was to the Riversdale bridge. Chris had been talking to someone the previous night who was part of the Otago Fly Fishing Club and they had said there were 18 anglers that had come down to the Mataura and 40 odd fish had been caught on the Saturday. On getting to the bridge we saw people staying at the Otago Fishing Club hut so we headed elsewhere.

We decided to head to the access point at Montana Flat, one of Chris's favourite spots. We weren't sure if the Otago guys had been up that far but decided to give it a crack. Once there, we could see the river was extremely clear but a little low with not a cloud in the sky. We were looking forward to a good day.

We split up and Chris & Noel headed upstream. Julie covered the middle and Joel & I headed downstream. We walked approx. 3km down the river then started to fish our way up.

The first pool we came to Joel spotted a fish and with his first cast of the day he threw a nymph on and hooked up albeit very briefly after the fish came leaping out of the water and spat it out but a very promising start.

A couple of hundred metres further up we came across another couple of anglers. It was a guide Stu Tripney and a client. We stopped and had a yarn for about 10 minutes and Stu was saying he had had a good day on the Saturday further up the river by Athol where he managed 26 fish for the day on a stretch of about 200m. I mentioned to him that I get most of my flies from him so after he looked at my collection, he gave me about 10 more of his that he thought would be handy (good score). We left them and headed further upstream as he only needed a couple of hundred metres for his client.

Walking along the bank we could see a couple of fish rising 2-3 metres off the bank in a very shallow part of the river. With the river being so low a gravel bar was just showing about 7 or 8 metres off the bank. The water was still just coming over the bar so it sort of created a bit of a backwash. Joel spotted a fish feeding just in the white water where the water was coming over the gravel. (I swear Joel has got eyes like a hawk when it comes to spotting fish!). Any way, Joel gave me first crack at it. I had a parachute adams size 16 on and a wee nymph on underneath. Second cast the fish took the nymph. Tried to lead the fish down stream as to not disturb the other ones which was not hard as he had plenty of fight in him and took off downstream any way but he eventually came to the net and a nice 3lb brown on the board.

Joel was next up and had a go at the other ones we could still see feeding on the surface. Pretty sure he was using a blowfly pattern with a nymph underneath. Any way 2<sup>nd</sup> cast Joel was on the board with a solid 2 pounder. My turn again as there was still fish to be seen in the pool. I had lost my nymph when netting my first fish so just tried the dry by itself. First cast the dry was taken and we were on again. Another nice 2.5lber came to the net.

With fish still in the pool we continued to take turns and in the space of 15 minutes we had taken 7 fish out of the pool. Was unbelievable and Joel and I couldn't stop laughing as to how easy and good it was. Will probably never get a pool like that again.

Continued up the river towards the vehicle and we managed to get another 8 fish between us.

Joel ended up with 9 fish for the day and I managed 7. All in good nick as well. Met up with the others and Chris had managed 7 for the day and Julie 2.

25 fish between us for the day. Pretty stunning day on the river.

## Mavora Trip by Dave

The day after the Club BBQ Julie joined Cole and I for a 4 day trip to Mavora. Somehow, we managed to fit all our gear in and were soon on the road with the boat in tow.

Once at Mavora we soon had the boat in the water and headed off up the lake to Careys Hut and had to unload all that gear again. There was no-one else at the hut so we had the choice of bunks. Once we had settled in, we headed up to the river mouth to see how much action we could find. Initially we fished the lake edge then I set off up the river. A few rainbows were landed.

We were in for a surprise when we arrived back at the hut as there were people everywhere. It was a group from Fiordland College who were on a school tramping trip and there were 33 people all told. Fortunately, most were camping outside but we had three ladies in the hut, two were senior students helping out and the other was a parent. Those out side were a couple more parents and a couple of teachers and the rest were year 11 students. They had started at The Divide and tramped down the Greenstone River before crossing to Taipo Hut on the Mararoa River then on down to Careys Hut. The next day was their last day and they only had to tramp down the track to the bottom of the lake.

The next day the plan was much the same but I decided to head further up the river, walking up to where the Windon Burn enters, to leave the lower section for the others if they decided they had had enough of fishing the lake. I didn't see many fish but caught a couple of rainbows both rising to a dry fly. When I came back down I found Julie and Cole close to the Windon burn. They had caught some fish in the lake then decided to walk up the river as Julie hadn't been there before. We had smoked trout for dinner that night, a rainbow that Julie had caught in the lake.

On the third day Julie and Cole fished the lake edge again while I headed up the Mararoa and then a short distance up the Windon Burn. Once I returned, we headed to another part of the lake and once again fished the edge. There were a few fish patrolling the drop off and I had a couple of takes on my dry fly.

The final day we again headed to the river mouth to fish the lake edge. There were a number of fish taking damsel flies and I finally landed a fish on an adult damsel fly. This is the pattern that we tied in the club competition a few years ago and I had never had success with it although I know others have.

Then it was time to pack up. Load everything into the boat and head home.

It was a good trip and the weather was co-operative for a change.

## Club BBQ by Chris

This years BBQ was poorly supported with only 5 attendees. However, while the food was good and the weather and the river were good, the fish were uncooperative.

Chris eventually landed a small trout and that was it for the evening.

## Oreti Backcountry Fishery by Dave

Have you been fishing the Upper Oreti River this season. If not you are the only one that hasn't. This fishery is normally dominated by non-resident anglers (about 80%). Of course they aren't here this year so you would expect the pressure on the river to be much lower. However that isn't the case and some beats are getting almost as much pressure this season as previous seasons. This shows that there are plenty of resident anglers that stay away because of the non-resident pressure in previous seasons, that are going there this year.

This means it is time for Fish & Game to restrict the pressure from non-resident anglers on this river so that the locals can have there fair share of fishing on it.

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

30 <sup>th</sup> Mar	MM	
6 <sup>th</sup> April	CM	Fly Tying
11 <sup>th</sup> April		<b>Club Day Trip</b> , meet at Fish & Game 8am
24/25/26 <sup>th</sup> April		Lodge Trip (End of Season)
27 <sup>th</sup> April	MM	
28 <sup>th</sup> April		Mid-week Trip – Dave Harris 027 201 6722
4 <sup>th</sup> May	CM	Fly Tying
9 <sup>th</sup> May		<b>Club Day Trip</b> , meet at Fish & Game 10am, to the lower Mataura
25 <sup>th</sup> May	MM	
26 <sup>th</sup> May		Mid-week Trip – Dave Harris 027 201 6722
29/30 <sup>th</sup> May		Lodge Trip – End of Season run, close Lodge

## 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 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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