

“Ripples”

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

April 2024



www.southlandflyfishingclub.org.nz



Southland Fly Fishing Club

President's Report by Dave

The season for the main rivers is pretty much over and it hasn't been a good season with regard to the weather. Lots of wind and rain and that meant many days of high and discoloured rivers. We still have the Lodge Trip to come this month as well as a couple of trips in May and the final lodge trip at the end of May. Of course, the high country rivers as well as the Waiau and the Mataura from Gore down remain open until the end of May and the lakes and lower rivers are open all year. If you are going to fish the Mataura remember it is closed on May 4th & 5th which is the opening weekend of the duck shooting season.

Other than my trip to the West Coast I have hardly been out in the last month with only two or three trips. I made a couple of trips to the Mataura with Gerda. The first of these was to the Upper Mataura. The river was carrying a lot of water and at the beat I wanted to fish there was too much water for Gerda to cross and to fish this beat a number of crossings would have been required so we headed further up and fished a beat where crossings were not required although we could have crossed if we had wanted to. We didn't spot many fish but did find a few that were rising but they were moving around a lot and spotting them was quite difficult. We did spot a few that were in positions that could be fished to and I landed a nice fish on a nymph after a number of fly changes. On the other trip we went further down. After quite a while I finally found a couple of fish that were rising and one of them took a liking to a cdc emerger. Others were not so keen. We had to turn back early as I needed to get home. On the way back down we found some more that were rising and, although some took a liking to my flies I didn't hook any. The other trip I went to the Upper Oreti (so finally used my designated waters licence). This was early April and the sun was pretty slow to get up to light up the water to allow spotting of fish. There was bit of colour in the water that made spotting really hard in the deeper water but I finally spotted some from a bank about a metre high. Wasn't the easiest bank to get down and net fish especially as there was a current right into the bank but I managed.

Unfortunately, I don't think the weather has finished with us yet. I planned to head to the Lodge a couple of days early for the final weekend in April but the weather forecast is for heavy rain on Thursday so will head up Friday morning, hoping the rain has not affected the rivers too much.

At our April Monthly Meeting we will have Les Ladbrook along to talk about photographing trophy (and not so big) trout and other photography on the river.

Our activities for May are a trip to the Lower Mataura on May 12th, a mid-week trip on 22nd and the final Lodge Trip of the season the final weekend of May (25th & 26th). Also remember the fly tying competition starts in May and details of the first fly are on page 5 of this Ripples.

April Monthly Meeting

Some members had asked for some training on taking photos of trophy fish. This is something I consider useful as I see many photos of trophy fish that are very poorly composed and that I certainly wouldn't use in this newsletter. As a result of this I have asked master photographer Les Ladbrook along at the April meeting to talk to us about how to take photos of trophy trout and also other tips on taking photos while you are on the river.

Les was a member of the Club and a keen fly fisher before shoulder damage made it difficult to cast a fly. When you were heading on a fishing trip with Les you had to be prepared to stop immediately if Les spotted something that looked worthy of photographing. He would take many photos going to and from fishing trips as well as on the river and normally carried a digital SLR camera when fishing.



Trophy fish photo supplied by Les

West Coast Trip by Dave

While we were at Lake Alexandrina Cole suggested to me that we should have a look at the spring creeks on the West Coast. Neither of us had fished them although I had had a look at a couple of places in the past through a rain covered car window (much too wet to get out and fish).

When I got home I set about looking for accommodation. The West Coast doesn't seem to have quite reached the internet age and it took quite a bit of time to finally find a book-a-bach near Harihari that looked like it would be suitable.

Cole arrived the night before departure and we went to the supermarket to get supplies as it didn't look like we would be able to get much in Harihari as we were warned the local shop shut at 4.00pm. There was no point in leaving early as we couldn't check in to our accommodation before 3.00pm.

The trip up was very frustrating with a lot of road works and the tourist traffic was just unbelievable, especially around Queenstown. The shortest route is up to Queenstown and then across the Crown Range to Wanaka. Once we got to Kingston we were in slow traffic almost to Haast. In some places the traffic was only travelling at 75km/h and much slower around the bends. To make the journey take even longer we were delayed for about 30 minutes at the Gates of Haast bridge while scaffolding was removed from the bridge. This had a good side as we were near the front of the queue and once moving again we were soon clear of those in front of us and had a pretty good run from there. I had set the GPS in the car to take us to our accommodation and discovered that the RAV4 GPS is even worse than the poor unit in the Jeep. It was determined to send us through the Cromwell Gorge and was still calling for us to make a u-turn at Cardrona.

We had a comfort stop and fuel stop in Wanaka and then stopped at Makarora for lunch. Once on the Coast you think you are nearly there but it is a long way from Haast to Harihari. We finally arrived at our accommodation just north of Harihari and were met by a nice young lady who initially directed us to the wrong house but came over to redirect us before we were even out of the car.

The weather forecast didn't look that great but we had to take what we got. My plan was to fish the Waitangitona River on the first two days and then have a look at the La Fontaine on the final day. With our accommodation being in Harihari (I couldn't find anything in Whataroa) we would have to cross Mount Hercules twice each day but it wasn't too bad.

On our first day we headed to the river expecting a bit of rain but it never arrived. When we arrived at the river



Cole with a West Coast brown

it looked pretty small but that turned out to be a tributary and when we walked down we soon found a much bigger river. This was definitely foreign territory for me with all sorts of impenetrable vegetation much of it with sharp bits (blackberry and gorse) making access to the river challenging. We didn't spot many fish although there was at least one I should have been able to catch but I just could not find a fly it would take. I was expecting to find rising fish but we found none. We had walked down as far as we could easily access and then walked up until we were again bush wacked so

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West Coast Trip (cont)

(Continued from page 3)

headed back to the car relatively early. This gave us time to explore a bit and sort out somewhere to go the following day.

The following day we approached a farmer who was quite happy for us to drive up his track to fish the river. We found a spot where we could access the river easily and parked and got ready. There was a high bank above the river where we parked and Cole spotted a fish at the bottom of the bank. It was soon hooked and I was asked to go down the bank and net it for him. It looked a bit challenging as there was only a small ledge at the bottom and most of the water was pretty deep. I managed to get to the waters edge and was able to net the fish without falling so all was good. Once again when we got moving there was a lot of vegetation to deal with and we needed to cross the river a number of times to make progress upstream. We did spot a number of fish but they were extremely spooky and were on the move as soon as you cast too them. Once again nothing rising.

The third day saw us on the La Fontaine. We walked some distance downstream before fishing back up. The river was quite clear initially but there was a tributary that was carry some colour flowing in a short distance from where we started. It should have still been possible to spot fish but there was a lot of filamentous algae in the river and that covered a lot of the bottom. We did spot a few fish and even had one rise once immediately below us but the blackberry made casting a bit difficult. I did hook one fish on a nymph but it broke off when it jumped and I suspect that the line got caught in all the algae as the fish rose out of the water. We went to a second spot and got permission to fish a steam on a diary farm. With no sun, spotting was difficult although I did spot a couple of fish I suspect they had spotted me first.

The following day we packed up and headed home, this time going through Cromwell and Alexandra. It is quite a bit further but not much in the way of tourist traffic and we were an hour quicker getting home than we had been going up.

Was it worth it? Any fishing trip is, so yes it was. The Waitangitaona River looked good but should have had more fish. The other spring creeks were pretty modified and don't look to come from a single spring or a close lot of springs but are more like drains coming from farms with a lot of ground water coming in at various points. There is also a lot of dairy farming in the area and I think that may explain all the algae as it is inevitable that nitrates from the farming will get into the ground water and then the creeks. I was disappointed not to find fish rising as I expected especially as the only flies I tied for the trip were dry flies.

Competitions by Gerda

Fish Competition

April is the last month there will be a draw for the season. Get all of your fish cards in before or at the meeting to go into the draw. I will still accept cards for the competition until the June meeting.

Fly Tying Competition

May will be the first month of the Fly Tying Competition. Dave will demonstrate this fly at the April Monthly Meeting.

The first fly is an elk hair emerger as shown in this Ripples. We still need to sort out flies for the rest of the competition and are open to suggestions. If there is a fly you tie and use that you think would be suitable let me know or if there is a fly that you would like to know how to tie also let me know and I will find someone who can tie it to show us all so we can tie it for the competition.

May Competition Fly by Dave

Elk Hair Caddis

This is a pretty simple fly in that it has only three materials in addition to the thread and hook. However, any fly involving deer (or elk in this case) hair can be a bit challenging. You will need to remove all the fluff from the elk hair and stack it in a hair stacker to get it right.

The materials I have listed are what I had. There is no reason you could not use brown thread and the dubbing colour is not particularly important as you don't see it well. The first couple I tried I used a light dun hackle but I realised most people would not have this so I tried the grizzle hackle instead and it looked pretty good so will stick with that.



Materials:

Hook	Black Magic B12
Thread	Unithread Camel 6/0
Dubbing	Surestrike Natural Rabbit brown/olive
Hackle	grizzle saddle hackle
Wing	Elk Hair



Put hook in vice and run thread down to the bend in the hook.



Tie in the hackle at the bend in the hook facing away from the eye.



Dub the body with a bit of a taper and then taper down again towards the eye. Don't go too close to the eye.



Wind the hackle forward with about six turns and tie off. Then trim the hackle.



Cut some elk hair and remove all the loose material near the bottom of the hair. Stack hair in a hair stacker then tie in. Length should be just out beyond the dubbing.



Whip finish and trim the elk hair to form a head. If there are any stray bits of hair trim them off and put a dab of cement on the whip finish.

Photos From This Season



Opening day Aparima brown.

Ian with an Aparima brown caught on the October Lodge Trip.



Cole preparing to cast to an Eglinton fish. He was successful.

Cover Photo by Dave

Cole hooked up on the Waitangitaona River on the West Coast.

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

27/28 th April	Fishing	Lodge Trip (End of Season)
30 th April	MM	Photographing trophy trout speaker
7 th May	CM	Fly Tying
12 th May	Fishing	Club Day Trip , meet at Fish & Game 10am, to the lower Mataura
22 nd May	Fishing	Mid-week Trip – Dave Harris 027 201 6722
25/26 th May	Fishing	Lodge Trip – End of Season run, close Lodge
28 th May	MM	
4 th June	CM	Fly Tying
16 th June		Fly Tying day
25 th June	MM	Members Video & Photo night plus photo competition

Club Contacts

- Address **Southland Fly Fishing Club, PO Box 1689, Invercargill, New Zealand**
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Items for publication must be submitted to the editor, prior to the 10th of the month
- Librarian Chris Cowie (027 236 9576)
- Lodge Custodian Dave Murphy, 35 Brown Road, Invercargill 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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