

“Ripples”

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

February 2026

www.southlandflyfishingclub.org.nz



Next Club Meeting - February 24th - 7:30pm

Fish & Game Office, 17 Eye Street



*Southland Fly
Fishing Club*

President's Report by Dave

First a special welcome to those who will be reading this Ripples for the first time, having come on our Fly Fishing Course.

Well, it's been a busy month for me although quite a bit of it other than fishing.

We had our course the last weekend of January but had to postpone the day on the river due to river conditions. This was held three weeks later but we only had eight people attend.

Some of our members had a very successful trip to Lake Alexandrina with plenty of fish being caught.

Unfortunately, the February Club day didn't happen as there was no-one to take the day although I think one prospective member may have gone out. Hopefully the March Club trip will go ahead. At present it looks like that is one of only two weekends I will be in Invercargill so I should be out on the Club trip.

I personally have only had three days out since the last Ripples, two on the Hamilton Burn with a bit of Aparima thrown in without success and a good day at two spots on the Oreti. The Oreti trip was before and after a meeting I had in Lumsden. I made the most of the opportunity and decided to fish the Oreti at Centre Bush on the way up. Unfortunately, there was another car there and I couldn't see the occupants so I moved on to Benmore where the bridge used to be. There was a camper van there but the driver was just there on the river so I was able to talk to him. He was going upstream so I decided to go downstream. While getting set up another car arrived with two Aussie anglers. I sent them to the next access downstream. I walked down a reasonable distance before starting to fish and immediately spotted fish rising in a small side stream under the willows. The first I fished to liked the look of my willow grub and it came to the net. It was followed soon after by a small fish that was swimming downstream and it took my willow grub. There were other fish there but they proved a bit elusive. I moved on up the river without spotting much and then spotted a fish on the far side of the river under a willow. I lost sight of it and the next thing I spotted a fish swimming upstream in the current in the middle of the river. Almost too good to be true with no worries of hooking the willows or getting drag. It took the willow grub first cast. From here it was off to my meeting. After the meeting I went to the Lumsden Bridge. Crossing the river was a bit of a challenge but I was soon at a backwater just upstream of the bridge. I saw quite a few fish in the backwater but I was on a bank a couple of metres high and the fish could see me quite well. It was quite a walk before I spotted any more fish but then I had one rise just upstream and it was soon hooked on my willow grub. There were a couple more rising here and there and finally one of these rose to my dryfly which I use to tell me where the willow grub is. By this time it was time to go so I headed back to the car and home. It was good to find some fish taking willow grubs but they were not as active on them as I have seen on the Mataura in the past.

South Canterbury Anglers Club Lodge (Lake Alexandrina) by John

Just showing you this extremely beautiful outdoor furniture, featuring coloured 'n polished concrete slab table, decked out with ornate seating. Soon to be capped off with a shade sail.

We may have used it once for chips 'n dip and again for gutting a fish but the table gets very warm. Definitely need a coaster under your beer.



Cover Photo

Julie with a good Lake Alexandrina rainbow.

Lake Alexandrina Trip by Julie

Day 1 - arrival:

Cole was already up this way and he fished happily until midday. Cole was rightly proud of a beautiful looking rainbow measuring 62cm he had landed this morning. So a very high standard had been set for the next five days.

Cole was first at the hut followed by John around 3.30. I arrived at 5pm and John and Cole were unpacked and nibbling on crackers and dip. We had a lovely catch up. John and I worked on preparing our rods and reels for tomorrow. Once that was done, I finished unpacking my car and started to prepare tea while the other two went down and sorted the rowboat. John had brought up his kayak and he prepared that. We all agreed this fishing trip is something we had all looked forward to for the whole year after such a great trip last year.

We were brought down to earth quickly when I asked who had the life jackets. Panic stations (oops). Dave brings those!

John had his and had fortunately put in another older one to sit on. That was quickly resurrected but only fitted Cole. John kindly said I could use his and after searching the premises we found one in the hut. Thank goodness.

After the crisis was averted, we settled to a late dinner. This was a lovely salad with home-made dressing, peas, potatoes, salad, chicken and ham with all the trimmings.

We were all in our beds by 10pm with exciting thoughts and hopes for tomorrow.

Day 2:

All awake and up by 5.30 and on the lake by 6.30. Quite a lot of action on the lake and at 7.22 John landed a very nice 4½lb rainbow. At 7.50 I landed another nice fish 6½lbs. The next one I brought to the boat was a little tiddler of 1lb. John caught his second fish around 9am. This was another healthy looking fish of 3½lbs. We were all very happy with our morning of fishing. We needed to make a few changes though. During the morning we discovered weighing, measuring the length and taking a picture of the fish before releasing was borderline to their well-being. After that we kept the fish in the water as much as we could while undertaking these procedures before releasing. We worked as a team and improved the process. There were also a few gear issues. I had problems with my braided fly line. The inner core at the join had rubber protruding through it and this caused my line to get stuck on the rings of the rod making winding in very difficult. (Not to mention the impact of a broken finger on my reel hand.)

The wind started to get up so we went back to camp and sorted our gear for tomorrow.

In the afternoon we went into Tekapo as Cole was keen for desserts, naturally those that know Cole, ice-cream and custard were high on the list. Wine and nibbles followed before sharing another lovely meal. In the



Julie hooked into a good fish



Another fish in the net

Lake Alexandrina Trip (cont)

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evening, we talked about recent fish books we had read and discussed a few theories on fishing we agreed with and some we didn't. Early night for everyone in preparation for another early start tomorrow.

Day 3.

On the water by 6.40 and first fish landed eight minutes later. The best condition rainbow I have ever landed. 7lbs 7oz and 54 cm long. The girth was 35cm. A really beautiful fish.

I had arranged to meet Serena who was coming through for the day and bringing a better quality life jacket for Cole to use. I got dropped off back at shore at 8.30 and spent a lovely day with Serena. Cole and John continued in the row boat with John fishing till mid-morning. He caught a lovely 4 lb rainbow and another that got off as it neared the boat. The wind increased again and Cole said it was frightening and lake surface became very bumpy. The only good thing was it was blowing them towards the shore. Once safely back they recovered and dined well and we all had a relaxing afternoon.

Cole cooked a wonderful hot pot of lamb shanks and we dined like kings with dessert of fruit, ice cream and custard then it was an early night for all.

Day 4

Another exciting day. We were on the water at 6.45 and first fish at 6.50. It was a great morning for fishing and by the time we went in at 10.50 we had hooked 11 fish and 7 fish came to the boat. Four departed on the way in. Everyone worked in with John becoming the champion netter and Cole landed his first fish at Lake Alexandrina. One that I was finding was just too much of a challenge. They were very large fish with data showing most over 6lb and some up to an estimate of 8lb. All rainbows. As we were catching and releasing, data was difficult. We were mindful of keeping the fish in good condition so some we just admired and let them on their way.

Returning to the hut our world collapsed around as we found our tank water running down the sink. We raced around looking for someone to help us. Canadian innovation helped us to stop the flow.

Jandel, vice grips and a bottle. This stopped the flow until we found a plumber. Lo and behold help was at hand when a hut neighbour found a new matching tap to replace the broken one under his house. It was quite a time dashing around trying to turn water off and get help without cellphone coverage. Crisis averted we had a relaxing afternoon with us all catching up on some shuteye.

Day 5

Serena had enjoyed her day so much with us yesterday she came back to do some serious fishing today.

We set off at 6.35 in what was an overcast day and very chilly with a little southerly coming up the lake. With ripples we could not see any rises. This morning we didn't start bringing fish to the boat till approximately 7.45.

After that fishing improved and we ended with 12 hook ups and 11 to the boat. As our goal was to release safely, we stopped measuring and weighing each fish. At a guess they were all over 4lbs. Smaller than some of yesterdays. An interesting scenario occurred when John and I had a double hookup within about 5 seconds of each other. There we were trying to bring in 2 fish with one net.



That stopped the flow

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Lake Alexandrina Trip (cont)

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What was even more interesting was when both fish decided to go to the same side of the boat. The captain was amazed at our skillful management of the situation. This certainly got our blood pumping and we forgot the cold.

Another episode occurred when John got a nibble and then a further few nibbles and once landed we discovered the hook was well into its gullet, so he became a keeper.

It was another unforgettable day on the lake. Serena stalked the edges until the chill got too much and we sought refuge for the afternoon at the Alpine Lavender farm where we indulged in lavender infused ice creams.

The weather warmed as the day progressed. But this was the coldest morning on the lake.

Final Day

We went out for a fish all mindful and sad that this was the final day. The fishing has again been unbelievable.

Went back and tidied up the hut and said farewell. Our final count of fish to the boat was 31. We were all very pleased with the catch rate.

Considering it was Waitangi weekend we were surprised at how quiet the camp was. No pressure on the water at all. At maximum we saw four boats on the water and yesterday we saw only one other boat. Today only us.

As John said “the whole place here is so enjoyable and almost like a retreat and the fishing is an added bonus.” We are all leaving with improved wellbeing physically and mentally. Roll on 2027 trip.

Fly Fishing Course by Dave



Mike taking the course at the Fish & Game Office

Our annual Fly Fishing Course was scheduled for the weekend of January 24th and 25th. We had 17 people enrol for both days plus one who only enrolled for the first day. As the time approached the weather forecast was not looking great.

Saturday starts in the classroom (at the Fish & Game Office) and then we go to James Hargest College for the casting practice in the afternoon. We had one no show, the person who had only enrolled for the first day, but with 17 people it was a pretty full room. A usual there was a pack of goodies from Hunting & Fishing for each participant and a fishing pack from Manic Tackle for one lucky participant. Part way through the afternoon I had a call from Gerald at Hunting & Fish-

ing as he had a lady there who was keen to take up fly fishing and she wanted to come and catch the end of the course. She soon showed up and took great interest.

When we headed to James Hargest it was raining but that didn't deter anyone including our extra lady who didn't even have a coat. The casting was pretty good but we were away a little earlier than usual as it was pretty wet.

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Fly Fishing Course (cont)

The heavy rain had continued overnight and a check on river levels on Sunday morning told us that we were not going to be able to fish that day. Chris managed to contact all the participants to tell them we wouldn't be going out.

At the following Club meeting we discussed when we could hold the second day and Sunday 15th February looked good with Chris, Gerda, Isaac and myself all available that day although Isaac didn't make it due to an upset stomach. Chris contacted all those that had enrolled and we had eight turn up on the day.

The river was in pretty good condition and at a reasonable level. Mike did not come down for the day so I gave the casting demonstration and then we got on with casting practice. Unusually no fish were hooked during the morning practice.

In the afternoon we split into three groups. I took some down the true left and Chris took some across the bridge and down while Gerda took the others to Coal Pit Road. Gerda's group had one hook that wasn't landed and the only other action was one little fish hooked by one of the people with Chris but I gather it was in slightly unusual circumstances. We didn't see any fish rising and they just didn't seem to be feeding. Still it was good casting practice for all and they all seemed to go home happy.



Casting training in the rain



Nothing like starting young. Jack casting on the river. The Mataura River at Wyndham on the day we were supposed to be there on the Fly Fishing Course

February Meeting—BBQ on the River

Our February Meeting (24th February) is on the Mataura River at Coal Pit Road. As usual we will have a barbecue tea that Isaac will cook for us. The Club will provide food and drink. If you are coming please let Dave know on 027 201 6722 by Sunday 22nd.

Before and after tea you will be able to fish. Coal Pit Road is the last road on the left before the Wyndham Bridge on the road from Edendale to Wyndham. We go in at the anglers access that is marked by a Fish & Game sign.

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

22 nd Feb	Demo	On the Fly Festival – Gore
24 th Feb	MM	This meeting is “On the river” --- BBQ Tea about 6pm
25 th Feb	Fishing	Mid-week Trip – Dave Harris 027 201 6722
1 st March		Teviot Fishing Competition
3 rd Mar	CM	Fly Tying
8 th Mar	Fishing	<u>Club Day Trip</u> , meet at Fish & Game 7am
25 th Mar	Fishing	Mid-week Trip
31 st Mar	MM	

Club Contacts

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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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