"Ripples"

The Official publication of the Southland Fly Fishing Club. The club was founded in 1974 November 2026

www.southlandflyfishingclub.org.nz



Next Club Meeting - November 24th - 7:30pm Fish & Game Office, 17 Eye Street

Southland Fly Fishing Club

President's Report by Dave

Well I still haven't managed much fishing this season. I just seem to be too busy and have been put off quite a bit by the weather conditions and river levels. I did manage a trip to the Von River with Chris and Gerda but someone forgot to invite the fish. I was also out on both days of the November Lodge Trip. It was good to have Andrew along on his first Lodge Trip even if it was only for the first day. Unfortunately Rick only managed one day as well, heading home with a crook knee after the first day.

I have a trip to the Lodge planned for early next month with 10 nights booked. Cole will be joining me for this trip and I have ordered good weather for the whole time.

We have our Fly Fishing Course coming up in January and so far we don't have anyone booked on the course. A number of people have told us at various events that they plan to come on the course but so far none have paid up. If you know of anyone that wants to learn to fly fish tell them about the course.

Finally as this is the last Ripples for the year I would like to wish all members (and all the other readers) a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

November Von River Trip by Dave

Traditionally I have tried to make a trip to the Von River on November 1st, the opening day for the river. This year it looked like the river would be up a bit and the weather forecast was poor so I decided to head that way on November 4th.

I decided we didn't need too early a start as it was unlikely the river would be crowded like it usually is on the first. Chris arrived at my place at 7:00am and we headed off up the road, picking up Gerda on the way. It was a pretty unexciting trip but there was a grader working on the road and in some places the road was pretty muddy. Most of the mud attached itself to my car on the way in. As we were heading down the big hill into the Von valley I noticed a cell phone tower on a hill on the other side of the river. That was new. Just to prove it worked I received a Fish and Game related call at the bottom of the hill.

The first spot we fished was at the bottom of the hill. Chris spotted a fish straight away but it had seen him first and it was gone. I saw a bow wave from one moving away and spotted a fish moving slowly upstream. It disappeared from sight but I decided to put a few casts up where it had headed. After a few casts I had a take on my nymph and a small rainbow came to the net. We didn't spot any more fish here so headed further down the river to check out the flats. It was a pretty similar story there although Chris did spot a good sized fish. It wasn't interested in anything he offered it.



Gerda on the Von River

After lunch we drove further up the river and walked down from the bridge. Once again Chris spotted a fish early on but it had seen him first. We walked about 1.5km down the river before fishing back up without spotting another fish. That was our lot for the day and I don't know where the fish were. Normally at the start of November there are plenty of rainbows in the river although the number has been down for the last couple of years.

Cover Photo by Isaac

Hook up on a dry fly on the Weydon Burn

November Lodge Trip Day 1 by Andrew

Club trip – Nov 7 - Upukerora River

Fly fishing is a useful antidote to a stressful job. I would challenge anyone to maintain a thought about what's going on at work when you're hooked up to a snotty trout that has turned downstream with conviction. Unfortunately, there is a bug in the reverse algorithm. A stressful job, it turns out, is absolute balls useless for your fly fishing. Well, that's my conclusion anyway, as a serial over-striker who yet again pulled flies from fishes' mouths in the Upukerora.

What it comes down to, I think, is poor quality of sleep. It would be so much better if I could remove my brain, sit it in a jar of alcohol, and conveniently put it back in when my alarm goes at an appropriate time of morning. But no, I too often wake up multiple times a night, or anticipate the day by being fully awake at way -too-early o'clock. The detrimental effects of poor sleep quality are well documented; so much so that they even feature in torture tactics and military strategy. It would be an interesting exercise to survey anglers on how many times a sloppy day's fishing equated with a poor night's sleep, or extrapolating from there, a shitty week of work.

Beyond the immediate antidote of hooking into fish, there is something wonderfully restorative about this pursuit we engage so passionately in. Places like the upper Upukerora River are special. There is a genuine feeling of wilderness and disconnection from the ills of humanity. And the funny thing was, we hadn't even planned to be there. We had set off at about 7:00am from the SFFC Lodge at Castlerock, headed to the uppermost access point of the Whitestone River. Unfortunately, we were met with one of the greatest ills humanity can deliver; a rental car and a foreign angler upstream!

Dave's local knowledge quickly had us pointed to a nearby alternative, and so we were soon at the uppermost access to the Upukerora. It turned out that this was not nearly far enough upstream, as it was 11:30 before we encountered our first fish. As is often true with low fish density, this fish was in an ideal feeding position, and a very tricky casting position, with overhanging willows and a gut of fast water before the slower water the fish was in. Nevertheless, I was able to get a dry fly and dangling nymph in front of it, which it inspected and rejected. A change of fly got the eat, and the subsequent overstrike lost the fish.

From there, we encountered fish every 500m or so of river, with a couple of pools holding multiple fish. Dave did well to spot a nice fish actively feeding in a slow side-branch of the river, heavily shaded by large overhanging beech trees. This fish was very determined to eat, and we were able to go turn-about until Dave hooked it on a pheasant tail nymph and guided it to the net without difficulty. We had confirmed earlier that there was no shortage of food in the river, by turning over a rock and counting the sedges and mayflies. This fish certainly seemed to be enjoying this and was in great condition for its size.

It had been a mostly cloudy day, which may have had some impact on our not seeing many earlier. That said, the amount of blind casting we did should've produced something had they been there. When the sun did come out, it made a huge difference to our ability to spot. There were a few more good opportunities, another over-strike, some inactive fish and some spooks. In the end it was one of those days where one has to be satisfied with good company and a day in the hills emersed in nature.



Dave with his Upukerora brown

November Lodge Trip Day 2 by Dave

With Andrew having headed home on Saturday evening and Rick out of action with a painful knee it only left Isaac and me for the Sunday fishing.

I was quite keen on going to the Mataura but a quick check of the river levels showed an increase in height of about 200mm at Fairlight overnight. The Waikaia was even worse so that was out as well. A return to either the Upukerora or the Whitestone (where Rick and Isaac had fished on Saturday) didn't appeal with the lack of fish. We set off and had a look at the Hamilton Burn but where we looked it had too many willows and we finished up heading to the Weydon Burn.

The stream was at a good level but had a little colour. Cloudy conditions were going to make spotting difficult but this was going to be the case no matter where we went.

We walked for some time (and fished likely looking water) before we saw any sign of fish. Finally we spotted our first fish but it was on its way by the time we saw it. Finally, we found a fish that was rising to mayflies. We couldn't see the fish but I knew where it was. One cast and it rose to my parachute adams and a 2½lb brown came to the net. I could see a few mayflies about and managed to catch one that had not managed to lift off the water. Fortunately Isaac managed a photo of it as my efforts were not successful. Looks like I should have been using a kakahi queen dry but the rising fish took the parachute adams any way.

We were on opposite sides of the stream and Isaac spotted a fish rising on my side. I soon spotted the fish (and it was a good size) but it was swimming downstream past me. I had some cover from some bushes but I think it had already seen me. It did come back up but wasn't interested in anything we cast to it. We did spot a few more but none that would come to Isaac's fly.

The weather was starting to look like it was going to rain hard so we decided to head out to the road and walk back to the car. What looked like easy going was a bit swampy and very tough walking. We finally made it back to the highway and had to endure a lot of traffic as walked back to the car. Our timing was pretty good as the rain started just as we reached the car. Straight into the car and back to the Lodge to get changed under cover there.

Another lodge trip over. Not the most successful but still worth going.



Almost to the net



Weydon Burn mayfly

Subscriptions

Subscriptions are now due. $30 for adult members, $10 for juniors and $40 for family. Please pay into our bank account ANZ #06-0925-0947474-00. Payee is Southland Fly Fishing Club Inc. Use initial & surname as reference.

Cast and Connect



Cast & Connect: Women's Fly Fishing Weekend
The Camp, Lake Hāwea | 11–13 December 2026

Join Women on the Fly NZ for a weekend of fly fishing, new friendships and time together supported by The Camp, Lake Hāwea.

We'll start with a shared meal and local fishing insights on Friday evening, explore local rivers and lakes on Saturday and Sunday morning, and enjoy dinner together on Saturday night.

This is a relaxed social fishing weekend for women with fly fishing experience, rather than a beginners' workshop or guided fishing event. Come with a friend or come on your own. Women new to Women on the Fly NZ are very welcome.

The Camp will be our base for accommodation, shared meals and getting together throughout the weekend, with accommodation options to suit different preferences and budgets.

Registrations are open.
Full details and registration: https://womenonthefly.nz/thecamp2026

Lake Alexandrina Trip

Julie is working on the 2027 Lake Alexandrina trip. Dates are likely to be February 19th to February 24th but she is waiting for confirmation. If you are keen to go contact Julie on 0276302949 or juliecook@actrix.co.nz .

Fly Fishing Course January 2027



We have our annual Fly Fishing Course in Invercargill on January 30th & 31st, 2027.

The course starts in the classroom then in the afternoon of the first day we go outdoors to sort out casting a fly. The second day is on the river, normally at Wyndham with more casting training in the morning followed by fishing in the afternoon. A fishing licence is required for the second day but you will need one of those to continue fishing after the course.

Course fee included subscription to the Southland Fly Fishing Club Inc.

Follow the QR code for full information or go to https://www.southlandflyfishingclub.org.nz/index.php/fly-tying-2.

Southland Fly Fishing Club has a number of rods that course participants can use on the course.

This would make a good Christmas present for someone keen on learning to fly fish and we can provide gift certificates if you require one.



Casting training on 2026 Fly Fishing Course

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

24th Nov	MM	
1st Dec	CM	Fly Tying
13th Dec	Fishing	**Club Trip**, Catlins – Meet at Fish & Game 8:00am
16th Dec	Fishing	Mid-week Trip – Dave Harris 027 201 6722
10th Jan	Fishing	**Club Day Trip**, meet at Fish & Game – 8am
12th Jan	Fishing	On the River, Tuesday straight after work, Coal Pit Rd
26th Jan	MM	
27th Jan	Fishing	Mid-week trip – Dave Harris 027 201 6722
30/31st Jan		Fly Fishing course run by Mike Weddell from Mosgiel

Club Contacts

- Address — **Southland Fly Fishing Club, PO Box 1689, Invercargill, New Zealand**
- Website — www.southlandflyfishingclub.org.nz
- President — Dave Harris, 30 Baxter Street Invercargill (027 201 6722) daveharris823@gmail.com
- Secretary — Chris McDonald, 334 Racecourse Road, Invercargill (027 423 7016) mcdonald.ccnd@kinect.co.nz
- Vice-President — Gerda De Bruyn, (022 166 1149) gerda.johnstone10@gmail.com
- Editor — Dave Harris daveharris823@gmail.com
  Items for publication must be submitted to the editor, prior to the 10th of the month
- Librarian — Kim Jansen (027 723 2305) kim@xunil.co.nz
- Lodge Custodian — Isaac Coburn, Marama Ave Nth, Invercargill 0204 1205 855 isaaccoburn72@gmail.com

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

Hunting & Fishing NEW ZEALAND

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