

# Trout Fisher



Issue 169 of New Zealand's only dedicated trout fishing magazine

**WINTER 2019**



**Can't  
Wait**

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# Trout Fisher

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## *Cover & Here*

THAT weather – Mike Kirkpatrick samples Central North Island winter fishing (*Andrew Harding*)



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# The Minister of Fishing

*An excerpt from Pulpit Radical, by Ian Dougherty*

**Trout** fishing is not an activity you might readily associate with church ministers, but the celebrated Dunedin Presbyterian minister, Rutherford Waddell, was a mad keen angler, as the following extract from Dunedin historian Ian Dougherty's recently published biography of Waddell reveals.

Rutherford Waddell transported with him from Ireland to New Zealand his passion for trout fishing. He generally managed to get away for a few days from the start of the trout-fishing season on 1 October; he often went with a friend. Waddell gloried in the grace of fly-fishing but wrote that he was not averse to using either live bait or artificial minnows, even though a friend spoke very contemptuously of the latter. "Anybody," he says, "can fish with a minnow; in fact, you might get a machine to do your fishing for you." Perhaps he is right, the minnow is certainly not so artistic as the fly, but it is deadly.' Temuka, which Waddell had first visited as an itinerant minister in August 1877, was one of his favourite holiday haunts, 'partly for beauty, partly for fishing'. He later stayed with one of his former fellow Theological College students from Belfast, John Dickson, who had found a job in Ireland before emigrating to New Zealand in 1886 and was the minister at the Temuka Presbyterian Church until 1902. Waddell continued to visit his favourite fishing spots in the snow-fed and rain-fed rivers around Temuka into his retirement. He described Waipahi in South Otago as another excellent fishing centre, the nearby Pomahaka River as an excellent river, and the Waipahi River, into which it flowed, as one of the best fly-fishing rivers in New Zealand.

Waddell sometimes mixed work and play. In March 1893, for example, he preached a Sunday sermon in the Temuka Presbyterian Church while on an end of season fishing holiday visit to the town. In October 1895, he preached at a Sunday school anniversary service at the Temuka Church on the Sunday and spent the next three days fishing in the Temuka and Opihi rivers: he caught 40 fish, the largest weighing two pounds. On a trip to Southland in October 1900, after speaking in Invercargill he travelled to Wyndham for two days of fishing before delivering a lecture in the town. He fished the Mimihau River, which flows into the Mataura River just above the Wyndham township, in the company of a veteran local angler, John Greenshields, recording 'fair takes' on both days from the renowned brown trout fishery. In January 1906, he combined a sermon in the Wairuna Presbyterian Church in South Otago with some fishing in the nearby Pomahaka River, followed by a service at First Church in Invercargill. Two months later, he went on a fishing holiday to Dunrobin on the banks of the Aparima River in Southland. In 1892, Waddell vied with fellow anglers for fishing tackle and books auctioned in Dunedin following the death of printer and bookseller James Wilkie, who was 'one of our keenest anglers': Waddell secured the two best fishing rods.

On what was probably his final fishing expedition, in 1929, Waddell went to Frankton on the shores of Lake Wakatipu. He wrote to an old friend, *It is lovely, for a while, to be out of the hurly burly, to feel in a quiet corner, far away beyond which "rolls the wrath of human life." I brought my fishing rod and bike with me, neither of which I have been using for four or five years. I felt a kind of stirring, a spring fever in the blood, that I used to experience in earlier years. So I tried the fishing here; but luck was agin me. Fish are said to be here, but I saw only one or two, and they declined my proffered friendship. Still it was good to swing the rod again and feel hope stirring in the breast.*

Rutherford Waddell's abiding interests in sport and writing expressed themselves in various publications. His writing was heavily influenced by nature writers such as John Burroughs, Henry Thoreau and Richard Jefferies. Most of Waddell's sports writing was about fishing. In a newspaper column in 1905, he first suggested turning 1 October into St Isaak Walton's Day, after the 17th century English writer best known as the author of *The Compleat Angler*. Waddell wrote, 'There are so many saints' days. Why does not somebody propose a St. Isaak Walton's Day? He is as well entitled to it as some of the others who are honoured in hagiology.' Showing the influence of writers such as Burroughs, Jefferies and Thoreau on his own nature writing, Waddell asked the column's readers,





*Rutherford Waddell, the complete angler, fishing in the Opihi River near Temuka in about 1925.  
P-A62.1-2, Presbyterian Research Centre Archives*



## Access to the Best Water

One thing I've been spending a lot of thought on recently is how to be more efficient as an angler. Efficiency turns into trout caught, and eliminating wasted time and effort is an admirable angling trait.

You can improve tackle, fly imitation, and technique, but often the best efficiency tactic anglers can employ is working out how to spend more time on the best water. Over the years I've used 4WD, hiking, helicopters, mountain bikes, and rafts to access premium water often difficult to access.

Many guides now tow a trailer housing a quad-bike to allow fast access for aging anglers across open ground, riverbeds and farm tracks. In a recent Trout Fisher article I extolled to benefits of my 4.1 meter aluminium pontoon boat for accessing lake tributaries and deltas.

But often, it seems that someone has got better access despite your best efforts. Sometimes access is lost through no fault of your own due to upset landowners deluged with unreasonable access demands by other guides and recreational anglers. Many times now, helicopter access has been trumped by overseas anglers camping for extended periods in prime wilderness fisheries and dominating those resources. We now live in a global fishery and competition for resources will never go away.

One simple strategy I have adopted of recent times is taking the time to go and visit new places in the off season when landowners are most likely to be receptive to a respectful approach for future fishing access. Visit the local bakery before you head upcountry, and you are likely to enjoy a cup of tea and much useful conversation at a time when farmers and landowners are more likely to have time to talk and form relationships with angling pilgrims.

*My latest angling access toy*

