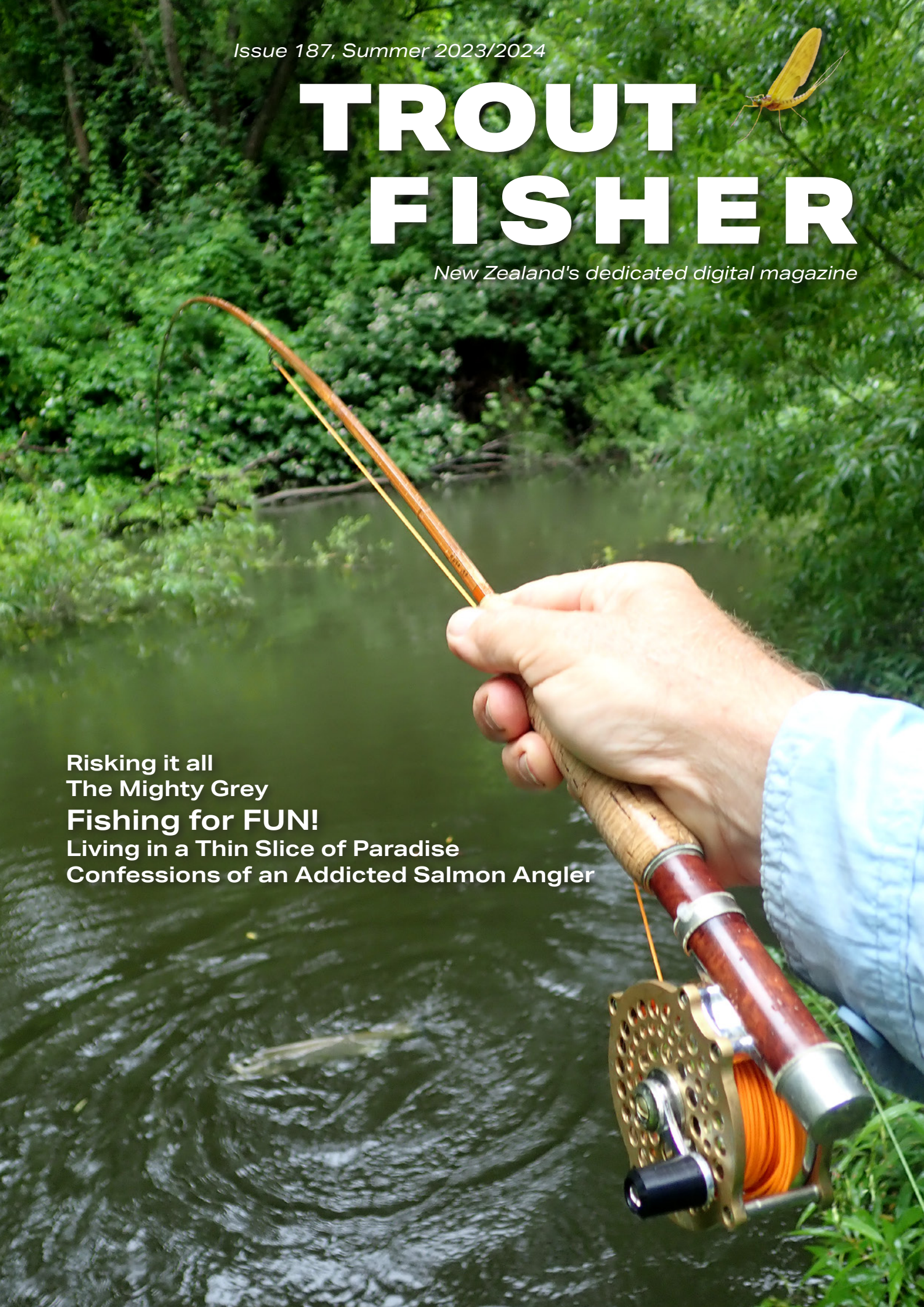


Issue 187, Summer 2023/2024

TROUT FISHER

New Zealand's dedicated digital magazine

Risking it all
The Mighty Grey
Fishing for FUN!
Living in a Thin Slice of Paradise
Confessions of an Addicted Salmon Angler



Issue 187

TROUT



FISHER

New Zealand's dedicated digital magazine

Summer 2023/2024

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Willow Grub feeders – a subtle feature of Summer fly fishing (Nick Taransky)

Here

An early season Lake Tarawera sunrise from the shoreline angler's perspective (Trout Fisher)

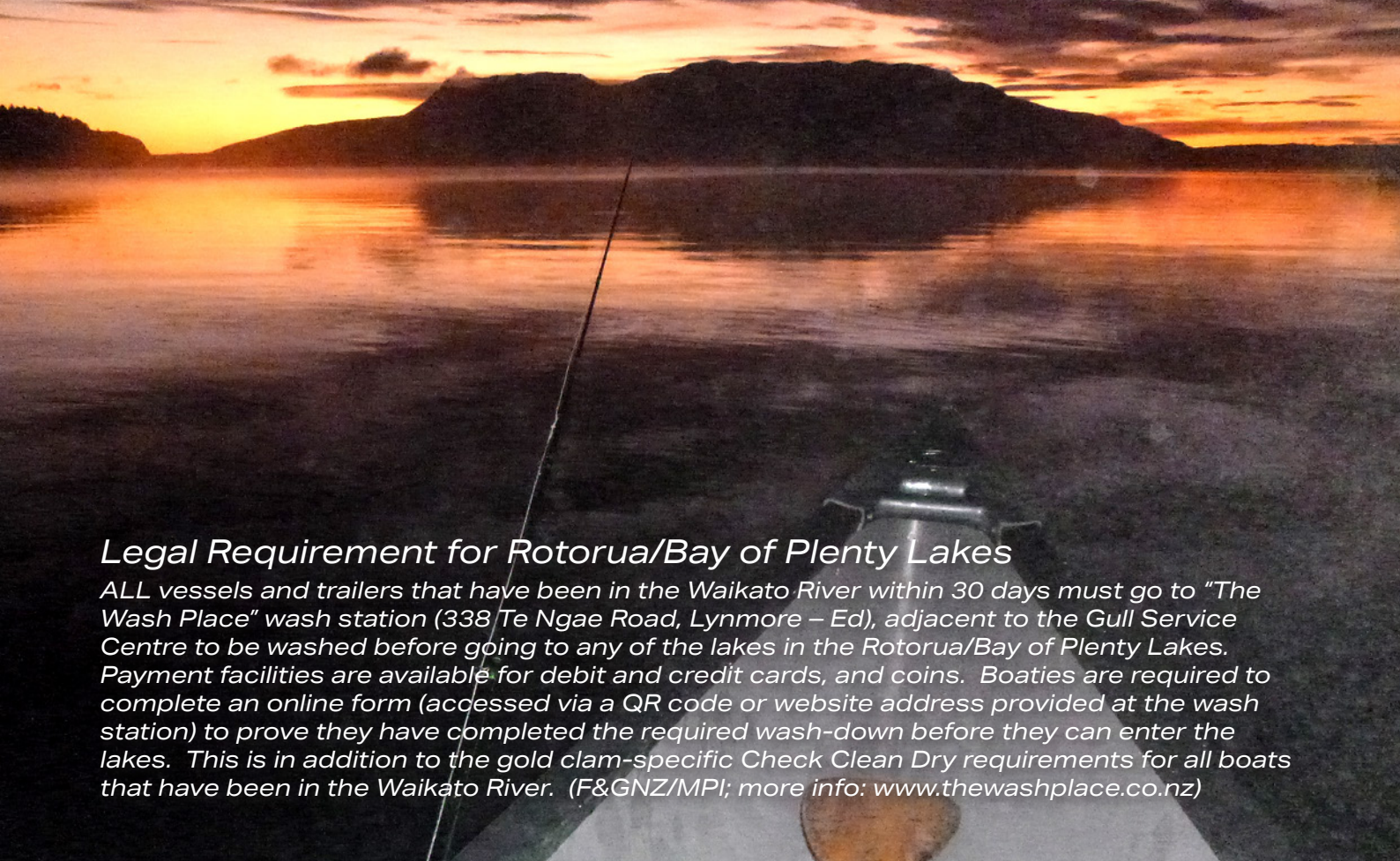
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Legal Requirement for Rotorua/Bay of Plenty Lakes

ALL vessels and trailers that have been in the Waikato River within 30 days must go to "The Wash Place" wash station (338 Te Ngae Road, Lynmore – Ed), adjacent to the Gull Service Centre to be washed before going to any of the lakes in the Rotorua/Bay of Plenty Lakes. Payment facilities are available for debit and credit cards, and coins. Boaties are required to complete an online form (accessed via a QR code or website address provided at the wash station) to prove they have completed the required wash-down before they can enter the lakes. This is in addition to the gold clam-specific Check Clean Dry requirements for all boats that have been in the Waikato River. (F&GNZ/MPI; more info: www.thewashplace.co.nz)

Apologies to those of you for whom this switch to digital-only has occurred without warning. I have been flagging the possibility for some time, but nonetheless, was hoping to put this issue out in print and see whether sufficient sales eventuated after the election to keep going (elections always deflate sales and this has been one of the worst). Recent bulk retail issues have sold miserably, however, and the Winter one especially. Combined with a substantial increase in mailing cost to put that issue out, the accumulated losses forced my hand. It was simply too risky to commit to another printed issue.

I do not see the economy improving soon either. Given the recent election result it's pretty obvious most New Zealanders have realised that we cannot keep heading the way we have for the past 200 years, or National would have achieved a clear majority. With the economy likely to stay depressed in the short term at least then, and given the negative environmental footprint of print publishing, combined with the wastage of sale-or-return retailing, the move to digital-only makes best long term sense. My intention is to keep going until it's plain this medium is viable. If it is, then I see the magazine reverting to bimonthly; if it's not, then I will close up completely – and I definitely hope that will not prove to be the case. It's been a pleasure producing this magazine over these last 32 years; a far more rewarding experience than my previous endeavour.

Meantime, there are intriguing times ahead, because kiwi trout fishers are entering new territory with this intended Ministry of Fishing & Hunting. Fish & Game have no clear picture what is involved at this stage but believe, from talks to date, the outcome could be beneficial for anglers if this new government, "walks the talk". Doubtful, given National's history over the time I have been publishing and therefore expecting it is intended to create further privatisation of our sport, I simply hope to be proven wrong.

I also hope this next government will not further diminish the freshwater resource available to support trout. The recent election suggests that if 'getting our country back on track' means freeing-up industry to turn even more of New Zealand into a mirror of its northern hemisphere counterparts, the public will not play along. The recent move by ECan over the Rakaia WCO suggests some think otherwise, however, and we need to stay vigilant.

Enough business and politics. My thanks to the numerous readers who have taken the time to register support of this next phase of Trout Fisher, whatever results. Have a great Christmas and New Year and before then, in between and after, it's Summer 2023/2024, it's holiday time and there are trout waiting. Tight Lines!



At that time of the morning there would be a lightening sky in the east and a hint of the sun rising out of the sea. The river looks like a sheet of glass . . .

Confessions of AN ADDICTED SALMON - Part 4

By Larry Burke



The 1993-94 season began for me with more energy and expectation. The two issues that had impacted my fishing the previous few years were gone, my health was now more manageable and my university studies were at an end, with me graduating with a BAHons degree, something I still find a little hard to believe. While employment searching was still on going there was a lot more free time for the addiction. While thinking about and trying to remember what happened back then recently talking to my son Matthew and he related to me his first ever river run salmon catch. In those days I would take both Matthew and Jeremy out of school for a day to go fishing when the salmon were running. The schools were notified. This is his recollection of his first river run salmon. Matthew had caught salmon at Tentburn before this. 'We caught them at Tentburn first and I caught my first salmon at the Kaiapoi (McIntosh's rocks side). We took a day off school. I was standing beside Jeremy, we saw a salmon surface maybe 15 feet away from us but before we could cast at it a boat cut in front of us and floated over the salmon. After it passed I cast where the fish had been and hooked it straight away. I think it was in the 12 to 14lb size. I probably caught it on a silver zed spinner. That was also probably the last time we fished that side of the river as you and Uncle Colin found out how to get to the point on the other side.'



MON ANGLER



Boats often seem to move the salmon when they pass and all of us at one time or another have caught them immediately after a boat passes by. There is a 5 knot speed limit and while most of the salmon angler boaties slow down when they see us there are sometimes problems with those out for a joy ride. We also at certain times of the year get rowing clubs and schools practicing out there and agreements have been reached of where to go so that there are no problems. Jet skiers are another matter but we generally all fit in. Newbies soon learn where not to anchor up as regulars let them know. At times there could be up to 30 boats anchored in the area salmon fishing.

The Kaiapoi freezing works had closed by this time and the river was becoming more like a river should be. There was still treated waste water from Rangiora, however, and the Belfast freezing works was still discharging. Nonetheless it was and still is magical walking the mile down the stopbank to the track, around dawn. There are birds singing and usually, no easterly wind. You dropped down off the stop bank on to a bit of an unformed track. Then you climbed under and over a couple of fallen large willow trees before you came out into the open space at The Point. At that time of the morning there would be a lightening sky in the east and a hint of the sun rising out of the sea. The river looks like a sheet of glass with the





occasional rippling of a small fish breaking the surface. Sometimes you would see a salmon porpoise. Very occasionally, one would jump clear of the water– an amazing sight with the water drops glistening – never when you have a camera, of course, but those images stay with you – photographs of the mind. There are outlines of the boats that have come out early in the dark to get their spots; if it happens to be a little foggy they give a ghostly appearance. You can't see the anglers on the rocks, but you know when someone has caught a salmon! To salmon anglers, the almost aphrodisiac, distinctive smell of salmon comes drifting up the river with the mist and has you all sniffing away.

The sun slowly rises and clears the mist as you start casting away, looking for the check or slight line disruption that lets you know your spinner has been taken. It seems that the longer you salmon fish, the take becomes an unconscious thing, as nowadays I strike before my brain registers that it is a fish. THEN, it does not matter how many salmon you has caught, you get weak at the knees until the adrenaline rush happens and does not fade after you land your bright silver prize. For a while you become the talk of the point, rocks and boats with anglers asking the weight, and others discussing how you played it until the next fish is caught. If nothing is caught that day then it is a day of relaxed casting, yarning to your angling





The sun slowly rises and clears the mist as you start casting away, looking for the check or slight line disruption that lets you know your spinner has been taken . . .

mates and anyone else who happens along in range, solving the problems of the world until you need to be somewhere else.

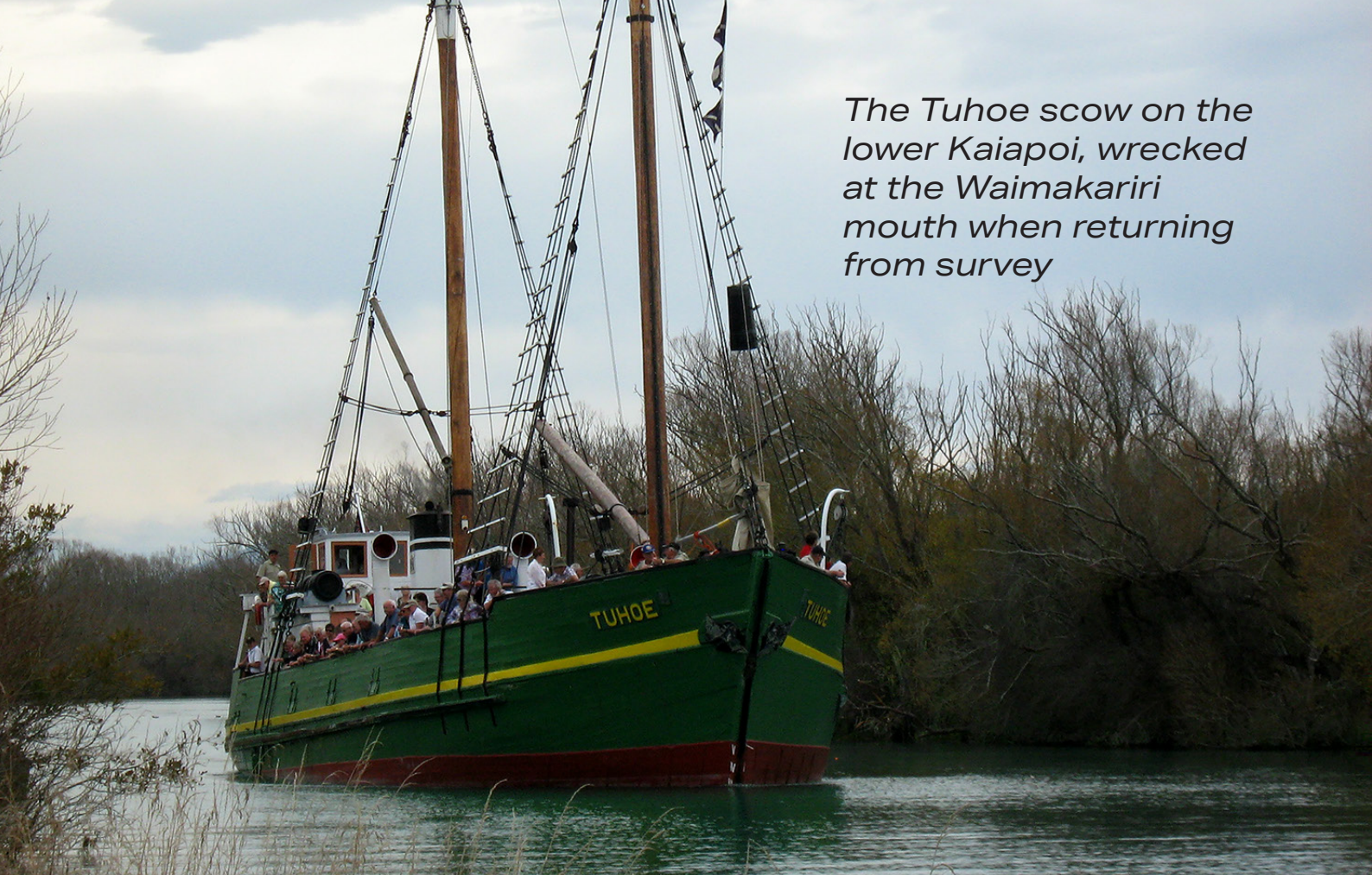
It was around this time that my brother Colin introduced a new method of salmon fishing, the Waimakariri Float. Fishing a whole Pilchard, this was a method used successfully down in Dunedin Harbour. F&G tried to establish it in Lyttleton Harbour where it did not work, as the salmon decided the Avon and Heathcote rivers were better places to return to spawn.

This came about because some days at The Point, there would be salmon showing in the hole all day but they could not be caught. Colin started off using a tennis ball as a float but the salmon would let the pilchard go as soon as it felt the drag of the ball. (You could not at that time buy the type of floats needed in Christchurch.) His next trick was to use empty plastic rollon deodorant bottles. He drilled a hole in the cap, poked a swivel through it and used a split ring to secure it. It worked.

The next trick was to hook a salmon, which proved a little tricky as he learnt that salmon did not swallow the bait but just crunched them up. Returning salmon do not feed, so we decided that they liked the taste and the smell of the pilchard, as their sense of smell and



The Tuhoe scow on the lower Kaiapoi, wrecked at the Waimakariri mouth when returning from survey



taste is greatly increased when on their spawning run to find their home stream. Colin managed catching one or two and other anglers started to take notice and questioned the legality. The regulations confirmed it. Other anglers wanted to know how it was done, Colin gave some lessons and it suddenly caught on like a plague all over the river, taking over, much to the "tradition spin anglers" anger. Got a little bit tense occasionally. So Fish and Game, at the annual angling regulations meeting, about a year later, changed the regulations, confining pilchard float fishing to the Kaiapoi river from 100 metres above the Waimakariri and Kaiapo river confluence.

About now I should mention another type of salmon fishing that has I think, died out. The only place I am aware of it occurring is also in the Kaiapoi river. (For a relatively small river – though in the early days it had trawlers and flat bottomed Scows – the Kaiapoi has many species of fish including salmon, both wild and hatchery-reared. There is a salmon hatchery on one of the side streams, originally owned by the North Canterbury Acclimatisation Society, and built in 1963. However it got too expensive and they sold it to the government, who had it until 2008. When Fish and Game did not want to buy it back the national government sold it to a consortium of salmon farming companies. Who by the way were very good to anglers, releasing smolt until F&G got the a government department to stop them, in 2019. A bit of a side track maybe has had a more then minor affect on my addiction as we shall see but back to this other form of salmon fishing, which I found fascinating but never wanted to try, as I don't think I would have the patience.) This method involves a fly rod, a centrepin reel, a flat-bottomed dingy, small freshwater shrimps, and entails sitting



Where the 'Gnomes' fished - photo taken at high tide after an oil spill, in 2022



extremely still for what seemed to me hours on end. The two anglers I watched and talked to the most even had to have a committee meeting to light a smoke so they did not move much. They fished the Kaiapoi around the junction of the Cam confluence, right in the middle of town. Their boat would be tied up to either bank facing the salmon in the hole so that it was across the stream. Both anglers would face downstream, side by side. They had normal length fly rods that were probably sea trout or heavy trout models. The reels were loaded with nylon; I cannot recall them using a trace. The hooks were heavy but small. Freshwater shrimp at that time were plentiful in the river; 2 or 3 were speared onto the hook and then the waiting began. The anglers hunched sort of forward over their rods, using split-shot to keep the line steady; the rod tip would be no more than 3 or 4 inches from the top of the water. They would sit there for hours, never moving until the take. Even then you never saw the rod tip, nor any other part of the rod, nor the angler move. The rod was just lifted and a fish would be on. Then the fight, dispatch, impale a few shrimp back onto the hook and back to the pose. They reminded me of garden gnomes. Would talk to you without looking at you nor moving; but, boy, could they catch salmon!

One day at The Point we had a day of salmon splashing around in the hole but not one take! Colin was still trying to work out his pilchard fishing. I went through my full supply of spinners and started into other bits and pieces. Came across a small brown rubber crayfish thing, with a small trout hook in it. Think my only reason for trying it was remembering those stoical shrimp anglers. Anyway, I had some larger sea hooks and threaded this rubber shrimp thing with claws onto one. Set the trace with a small trout weight about a metre or so above it, had a laugh with Colin, cast it out, let it sink to the bottom of the hole and retrieved. Suddenly the line stopped, I struck, and I had a fish on. Thought it might have been a trout or a kahawai, which come in there sometimes, but no, it was a salmon, a 10 pound fish. I still remember that fish and shake my head. The strange thing is, a week or so ago, looking for some kahawai spinners to give to someone, I came across it still in the tackle box. Maybe there's a message here . . .



*I still shake
my head . . .*



We started our 1993-94 salmon season on the traditional river salmon day – Boxing Day, 26th December. Having since October done some sea trout fishing and our usual pilgrimage to the high country opening, first Saturday in November to Lake Coleridge chasing land locked salmon mostly with maybe a bonus of a rainbow or a brown trout. We chose Tentburn – cannot remember why; most likely the main rivers were in flood or discoloured; and as I remember it, there was a good crowd there. When fishing at Tentburn the flow from the stream always went north and that was the favoured side to fish. However, sometimes, for whatever reason, the salmon would come in from the south and you always had an eye out for signs, So it was that day. I walked the 400 metres past the 200 metre marker moved to a spot further away than I thought was the best and threw a 65gm Ticer out around 75 metres, looking to feel which way the current was flowing and to find the strongest part of the flow, to optimise the spinner's movement. As I remember it, after a few casts my line went dead, I struck, got a couple of head shakes and a salmon was on. I quickly realised this was a good fish as I had little control for a minute or two – just hanging on and hoping it would stop before the line ran out. Fortunately it did. It is hard to know how long you fight a fish once the adrenaline kicks in, but it was a good fight, as I remember.



Landing a salmon on a beach can be tricky. You need to bring them in on a wave and preferably, with the fish on its side; otherwise their power, even in an inch or two of water, will take control. This salmon was large and it was the first I had caught over 20lb (9kg), weighing 23lb (10.5kg). I was over the moon and spent a bit of time just staring at. Finally put it in a bag and buried in the stones, marking where it was. I began a new thing this season collecting details of the salmon I caught mainly because I was interested in condition factor of the fish I caught and realised that because trout and salmon grow differently they need different charts. This fish's stats were:-

Weight	Length	Girth	Date	Sex
23lb	36inches	22ins	26/12	Jack
10.5kg	91.5cm	56cm		

Later I added other details – place, time, spinner, wild or tagged.

Back to the day, I went looking for another one. How quickly things change! About 3 casts later the top joint of my rod shattered, tried to fix it, didn't work, that was my day finished but I was not too upset. Matthew, meanwhile, had managed to snap his line while casting and the top section of his rod sailed into the sea. So he was also out of action until a bit later on an angler from the north side of stream came along, asking if this rod section he found washed up belonged to anyone. Matthew was very happy and if I remember rightly, he got a fish that day as well.

I ended up with 11 salmon that season ranging in size from 3 to 23 lb giving an average of 12.65lb(5.75 kg), catching 1 in December, 2 in January and 8 in March. 2 were caught at Tentburn and 9 from The Point hole, at the Kaiapoi / Waimakariri confluence. Two of the salmon I caught were tagged; that is, they had their adipose fin removed and a small engraved piece of metal inserted in their nose. NIWA, from Glenariffe, were collecting data on these salmon. If you caught a tagged fish, removed the head and delivered it to NIWA you went into a draw for prizes of fishing gear. You also received a letter giving you the life history of your fish and where it came from. This stopped about 1997, when Glenariffe was sold. Tagging for a different reason carried on, done Fish and Game and volunteers about 7 years later.

The biggest lesson this season was we found out sometimes there were salmon in the river from November, as the next season would show in a big way.



The 1994-95 season came around with sea run salmon showing up early. Usually the season works with fish being caught early in October, with a bit of a race to which river lands the first fish. It is either the Rangitata or the Rakaia; the Waimakariri is usually last. The Hurunui, in the surf, can begin anytime as the salmon pass down that way from Kaikoura, where they go as smolt, to grow for several years at that the prime food spot. We started our sea run salmon season in November, to see if the stories of early fish were true. I still didn't get my first salmon until the 29th of December but others got fish. Mine was worth waiting for. I turned up at The Point about 11.30am, probably due to domestic chores, as my wife at the time worked full time. Anyway, there was a line of anglers on each side of the Kaiapoi mouth and fish had been caught, some of good size.

I would have set up with a 22g Zed Spinner, probably silver, which by that time I was dulling down, to let some of the brass shine through – something I had thought about. On bright, sunny days I wondered if a flashing silver spinner could flash in a salmon's eye like a mirror does to us and it seemed to work. I had done this with Tickers in the surf instead of changing them when they were beaten up and it made no difference to the fish.

I fished away for about half an hour saw at least one fish taken. The other side of the mouth, McIntosh's, have this thing that they all stop for lunch at midday; not our side. They had hardly sat down when my line came to a sudden stop. Damn, a snag? No! The rod tip was moving back and forth sideways - it's a salmon on, felt big and heavy couldn't move it. This went on for a while the anglers on the other were saying it was a snag but the person next to me enlightened them. Everyone was watching. I couldn't move it. Then the line broke and that sinking feeling when you lose a good fish swept over. A deep breath, the other side went back to their lunch, I looked at the break and the line was frayed. This can happen when a salmon swallows a spinner. They open their mouths wide and shake their heads back and forth, with the spinner flapping from side to side, and as you hold the line tight it only needs to touch a tooth to fray and snap the line. Tied on another spinner and back to casting, thinking what could I have done? The truth is, nothing! You need to get the fish to move but unless you are using really heavy line you can't sometimes. I was using 12lb breaking strain. You never forget the fish you lose.

About 10 or so minutes later my spinner got hit again. This time the fish shot down the river into the Waimakariri, turned and came back, then made an even longer run downstream, taking about 50-60 metres of line. I managed to turn it, so that it swam up the Waimak. It then decided to jump – which is uncommon in salmon and the general consensus is they only do when foul-hooked – so this brought a few comments from the other side (but I had seen

the spinner in the scissor of the jaw). What I did cause me a bit of panic was my reel. It was a carbon fibre bodied model with a fairly long reel stem, and that was moving left and right and up and down with the combined pressure of the fish and me trying to land it. So I backed off forcing the fish and it took a while to get it in. We did not use landing nets; could have used a gaff but it was too far away to reach. It still, to this day, seems like one of the longest fights I have had with a salmon. Finally was lucky enough to land it and Was IT Worth IT!! This salmon was my largest to date. It weighed 26lb (11.80kg), was 36.5 inches long (93cm) and 22.5 inches (57cm) around the girth. I went home happy that day, first of the season and the biggest to date. What I was not happy about was the reel. I decided that I needed a metal-bodied one and heavier line. Lucky for me Jeremy had been offered a job after school by Malcolm Bell at The Complete Angler and chose an ABU, moving up to 14lb (6.4kg) nylon, trying different types until settling on Suffix, mainly, at the start, because you could get it in bulk 1400 yard spools.

I caught 2 more salmon over the next 10 days, an 8lb (3.63kg) and a 5.5lb (6.8kg), and released a small 2-3lb one on the 16th January. Things went quiet for the next week. We did not know what was waiting for us over the next 3 months . . .



Special Moments

Talking Plenty / On The Beach with Peter Storey



2023/2024 has kicked off much the same as most, in my 40 years' experience of Lake Tarawera. Unsettled weather, combined with below optimal feeding range water temperature, means plenty of water between fish and when fishing blind amongst those feeding casually it is impossible to know if they are rejecting without electronics – and as of mid-November I have encountered FAR more days when nothing works than good or tricky, on the shoreline and out on the lake. Unable to predict 'good' fishing days accurately, my yardstick remains: if I have not caught something fishing blind in 30 minutes, I won't.

Throughout October I was still getting better results shoreline fishing than open water and on 1 November that scenario solidified. Another dead morning out on the lake ended with me noticing surface activity on the way back and a special moment, with this Puriri Moth. They used to be pretty common around here early season but are now a rarity. Current economic logic dictates we replace native trees with exotic pines, clear fell those when mature and ship the trunks overseas unprocessed; there, the timber gets tanalised in order to last as long as native hardwoods like puriri, milled to order, and shipped back; so that we can build cheaper, on land that floods with every storm, due to the removal of native vegetation.

Wandering down the section later that morning a second special moment occurred. Heavy surface activity inside the weed made it immediately apparent the Spring smelting had begun (if there is also an Autumn smelting on this lake we certainly do not get the same opportunity to stalk fish from the beach). When the Tarawera Selective Breeding Programme was at its height, there would be fish in the 3kg+ bracket down there but ~2kg is more like it these days – and that still feeds the average family, while providing a decent fight and exactly the same challenge. (Some triploids could prove interesting, though!) This year's event probably began after the October full moon (29th) and has been low key so far, with both trout and smelt leaving the shallows during a week of constant easterlies. There are multiple smeltings, however, and we are in another mid-November; not that the fishing has become any easier.

That first day I noticed the smelt everything was simple – the fish were feeding freely – right up to the shore. The week that followed, despite poor weather, produced enough close encounters to evaluate the reaction of lesser-motivated trout to Ratropinna and reach the conclusion that it is more obvious than the real thing in sunlight. So I began looking for something closer in colour, silhouette and action . .



~2kg is more like it these days

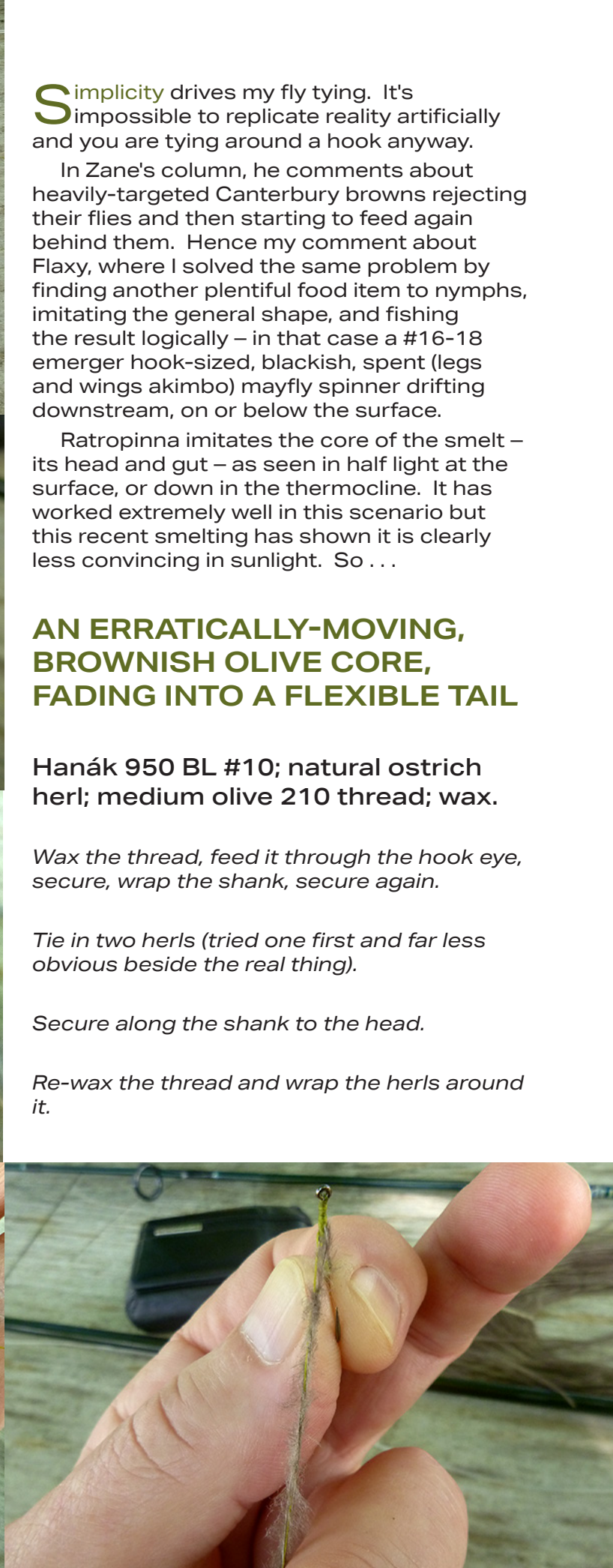
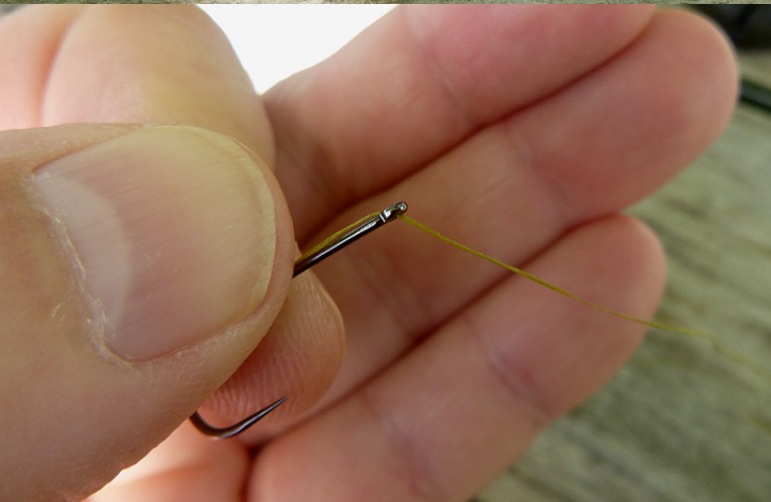


Ratropinna, and this fish took it



A typical spawning beach on a rainy day. The larger pebbles and darker patches are parts of the ~3 metres Cyclone Gabrielle took out of the foreshore. While fish can be hard to spot on days like this, if anything like the two highlighted clods is moving that's a smelting trout's shadow.





Simplicity drives my fly tying. It's impossible to replicate reality artificially and you are tying around a hook anyway.

In Zane's column, he comments about heavily-targeted Canterbury browns rejecting their flies and then starting to feed again behind them. Hence my comment about Flaxy, where I solved the same problem by finding another plentiful food item to nymphs, imitating the general shape, and fishing the result logically – in that case a #16-18 emerger hook-sized, blackish, spent (legs and wings akimbo) mayfly spinner drifting downstream, on or below the surface.

Ratropinna imitates the core of the smelt – its head and gut – as seen in half light at the surface, or down in the thermocline. It has worked extremely well in this scenario but this recent smelting has shown it is clearly less convincing in sunlight. So . . .

AN ERRATICALLY-MOVING, BROWNISH OLIVE CORE, FADING INTO A FLEXIBLE TAIL

Hanák 950 BL #10; natural ostrich herl; medium olive 210 thread; wax.

Wax the thread, feed it through the hook eye, secure, wrap the shank, secure again.

Tie in two herls (tried one first and far less obvious beside the real thing).

Secure along the shank to the head.

Re-wax the thread and wrap the herls around it.



Wind this rope down to the bend and back up to the eye. Tie off, trim and whip finish. Put the result in front of a smelting fish, make it move erratically, and see what happens.



The special moment for this prototype occurred just before sunrise and this ~1.5kg fish moved a long way to grab it. Where it looks quite dark under flash, viewed from above amongst smelt over a sandy bed in full sunlight, the size, shape and colour match look good – the smelt mob it too, just like Ratropinna. Unfortunately, this first tying left the shoreline around midday in a much larger trout's mouth, when the hook knot gave out (re-tie each time, Storey!). Two weeks' hard fishing – in every sense – suggest this tying is less effective than Ratropinna in poor light. In sunlight however, it definitely attracts more attention, often from distance, while refusals suggest I need to focus on movement. Most days, however, even with the shallows full of smelt, there has been no sign of trout. Blanking among feeders, out on the lake in the canoe, suggests most are too well fed to bother. Good job I am stubborn!

In closing, this 0.18mm/3.9kg tippet material showing above is imported by Nick Taransky. It's a camouflaged nylon and very hard to spot, possibly outperforming fluorocarbon here, even in half-light. It's also incredibly supple and combined, these qualities attracted me to it, for drag-free river presentation. All that remains with the magazine settled, is to finally hit one this season and put these same, well-proven tying materials onto a smaller hook . . .



LETTERS

Hi Peter,

I am very sorry to hear of the magazine's difficulties and the need to cease publication of the printed version.

I commend your desire to continue producing the magazine which for the time I have received it, I have always enjoyed. Your writers have generally written interesting, thought provoking and often rather amusing stories. An aspect I find of much interest and admire is that you have not shied away from important political and semi industrial issues affecting fishing, though I sometimes wonder if some will dislike discussion of these topics in association with their passion. However I still feel you are right to do this given the way fishing is being affected. I may have said this before but whilst in UK last year I fished at Farmoor Reservoir and was talking to an old vet and fishing partner of Bob Church. He told me he was never going to NZ again as the fishing had deteriorated so much over the time he had been going there. I remember the letter you published from the CEO / Chairman of 3M industries a year or so ago which I think had similar sentiments.

The division between NZ anglers and rest of the world due to the fishing pressure has been sad to see from this perspective, though I can quite understand the NZ angler's point of view. I guess the more the rivers that are lost or deteriorate the more difficult this relationship may become. Thus the importance of, as much as possible, preserving the resource and if possible reversing the decline. So the fishery's problems have to be talked about.

I am sure others will say this more eloquently than I, but to have continued publishing for 32 years is a major achievement.

Must say that edition 186 was much enjoyed by this subscriber. Human stories of how fishing was in the past / has developed may not be of interest to younger anglers but are important to those who want an overall perspective. The incredible adventures that one cannot go on

again but did in the past, are great fun. And your emerger ... a bit rough - yes, but that's the way the fish like them. Brilliant, and of course we all know of the success of the much chewed fly.

I am coming over to North Island NZ in mid to late January with my friend Malcolm Crosse who has been involved in competition fishing worldwide for many years. He is bringing an enthusiastic non competition angler...We are lucky enough to be staying with Malcolm's friend, Peter Scott, on the Upper Whanganui and fishing local rivers / lakes. I will endeavour not to let the side down too much.

Keep going if you can,
Chris Hilton, Tasmania.

*Pisa Creek, Cressy,
Tasmania*





ABSOLUTE TROUT TIPPET

Absolute Tippet is made with proprietary copolymer blends that are designed to drastically reduce water absorption while maintaining optimal suppleness for high knot strength. Absolute nylon leaders and tippet have a 29% higher wet knot strength compared to our previous material and up to 40% higher wet knot strength when compared to our competitors.

- Length: 30m spool in all sizes
- Patented cutter spool with freewheeling hub on small spool
- Colour coded label and line retainer band for easy line identification
- Supple monofilament for drag free drifts
- On average 40% stronger wet knot strength than other brands
- True-to-spec X sizes and breaking strength
- Colour coded silicone band protects tippet from UV exposure

Available Sizes:

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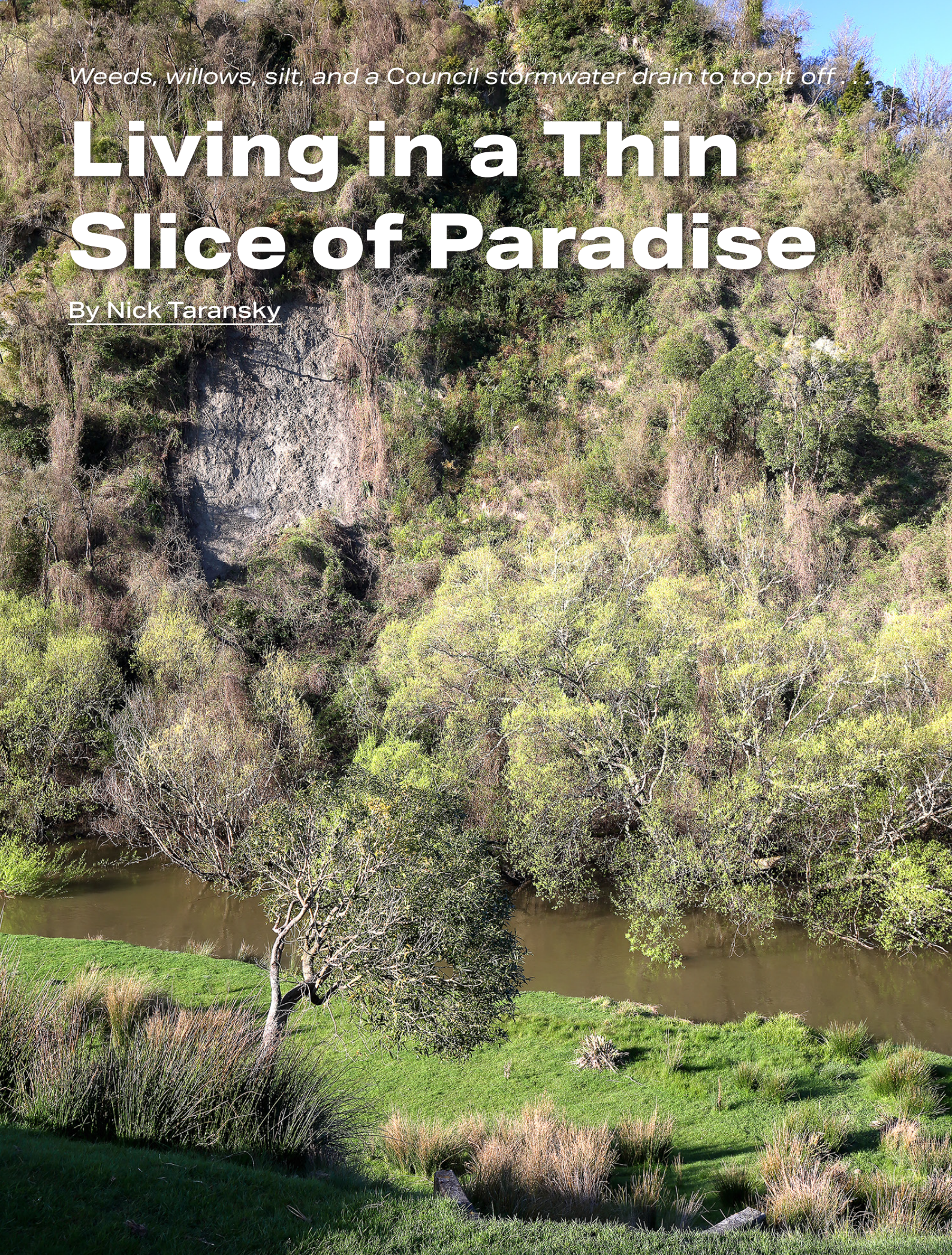
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Weeds, willows, silt, and a Council stormwater drain to top it off . . .

Living in a Thin Slice of Paradise

By Nick Taransky



Visiting somewhere for a holiday and living there are two vastly different propositions. I can use a fishing holiday as an obvious example. Firstly, trips are planned around the best time of season, so unfortunate weather events aside, you see conditions at their best. Secondly, because of the limited holiday timeframe, local politics, bureaucracy, and other nuisances associated with everyday life (like needing to work) don't factor into the experience. But living somewhere, you soon realise that there are four seasons (and a closed fishing season) to live through every year, plus all of the aspects of everyday life to deal with around the fishing.

This was hit home to me when I visited Kiribati for a bonefishing holiday several years ago. Talking to the young guides about life there, they stated their frustration at visiting anglers repeatedly telling them how lucky they were to be "living in paradise" on a tropical island with endless bonefish flats. As one of them told me, "for us and our children, we have no higher education path, no job prospects outside of guiding (where there is a deep pecking order for payment and growing competition), the island hospital has no doctor most of the time, there is no basic sanitation, the water is unsafe to drink, and the government has sold our commercial fishing rights to international fishing enterprises. It's basically a 2-week fishing 'paradise' if you have a home somewhere else to return to for the other 50 weeks of the year".

Of course New Zealand isn't in the same "third world" category as Kiribati (!), but living here for two years has reinforced the "holiday" vs "every day" comparison. I've lost count of the number of friends from Australia and elsewhere who've told me how lucky I am to be living in "trout fishing heaven".

Interestingly, quite a few of these people have never visited New Zealand, but have seen plenty of magazine articles and videos about the incredible fishing that obviously spans the whole "100% Pure" country. It probably comes across as being ungrateful if I ever share with them some of the challenges and problems facing anglers and the environment here.

One thing I really admire about this magazine (through our esteemed editor), is the balance that is presented between sharing a love of trout fishing, and providing a platform for raising issues that threaten it. As a relative newcomer here, and having been a "holiday" visitor for 30 years before that, I have the deepest of sympathy for Kiwi anglers who have seen fishing and the environment suffer decline over their lifetime.

Australia shares many of the same issues, including water extraction, intensive farming and forestry practises and invasive species. Tasmania, like New Zealand, at least has a recreational trout fishery of renown that offers "some" degree of political protection for trout through economic benefit of tourism.

Local Kiwi and Tassie anglers will have their own views on the plusses and minuses of this protection, with the downside of increased pressure from tourists. I can only say that as a mainland Australian trout angler, the level of trout hating among some people (including some recreational native fish anglers) can be very confronting. An extreme case was a native fish University Academic in my home state of South Australia who was an unapologetic trout hater. "Off the record", he bragged about electrofishing trout from a small stream as part of his "research", kicking them up the bank to die, in flagrant defiance of the law. A subsequent government trout review in that state decided that trout fishing was of "limited value" to a "small group" of people, and the result effectively withdrew support for trout in over 80 percent of the rivers. It's a testimony to the resilience of trout, and the people who passionately support them that they still survive there at all to this day.

As I write this, and you reading, we are looking across the Hautapu River on the small property Miri and I have bought here in the North Island. With maybe 50 metres of the property fronting the river, in keeping with the Kiribati terminology, I call it living on "a thin slice of paradise". It's interesting, and a little sobering to observe that several of the issues threatening trout and the wider environment in New Zealand seem to be present in this narrow microcosm at my back door.

Starting with the river itself, I should start with a couple of positives. It does hold a good population of brown trout, and I've observed a diversity of aquatic food sources, including mayfly, caddis, midge, corixa and bullies. In saying that the food is diverse, I would stop short of calling it prolific in food population density.

This goes to the first threat. Water quality. The river often carries a high silt load and discolours after even modest rain, particularly in Winter, and suffers algal growth in Summer. Yet 15 minutes drive upstream, it remains clear, where flax and other native vegetation borders the stream. Geographical changes along the catchment might explain some of



this, but there is a noticeable difference in grey papa discolouration from possible natural cliff erosion, and brown muddy water pouring off some bare paddocks adjacent to both the main river and tributaries. (I say "some", as there is evidence of riparian fencing and positive farming practises too).

The second obvious thing of note is the range of invasive vegetation. How much of this affects the fishery directly, and how much the environment more generally is up for debate, but at the end of the day I think that everything is connected. At the very least, for me, a large part of the fishing experience is the overall beauty and vibrancy of the environment. It's hard to look at fish alone with tunnel vision when the land around is suffering.



The sloping cliff opposite us has a few native trees clinging onto it, but these are being heavily covered by Old Man's Beard vines (*Clematis vitalba* – above with close-up of the seed head overset). Elderly neighbours tell us how sad they are to see a once beautiful native view being choked to death. I did make a feeble attempt to scale the lower part of the cliff face with secateurs and vigilant herbicide to rescue some badly affected Maire trees, but couldn't reach them because of an impenetrable wall of blackberries. I know there are efforts being made to tackle Old Man's Beard, but the cliff-loving nature of it, and the fact that the seeds spread on wind and water makes this, like many spreading weeds, an "uphill battle".

Willows are another "feature" that define the far bank of the river opposite us. Are willows a blessing or a curse? It seems to depend who you ask. In some places they are advocated for erosion control, and many anglers, myself included, play the cards that they are dealt and chase the inevitable willow grub feeders. There's no doubt that willows can afford some shade and protection for fish. But allowed to go unmanaged they can completely choke up waterways, and are very thirsty in regard to water consumption. Like many of these problems, total removal can be easier said than done. I've seen rivers in Australia turned





into to tepid drains after scorched earth willow removal, without any aftercare or native vegetation planting to follow it. In Taihape we have a lovely park, dominated by native bush. The river through the park however was lined with ever increasing willow infestation. Last year the willows were removed mechanically, leaving the river edges looking a little like the moon, which was a little confronting to see in the beginning. There has been an extensive replanting program of native trees, flax and grasses, so hopefully in the long run it will all be for the best. The willows have already resprouted with a vengeance though, so there will be plenty more work to do, to stay on top of them.



Hautapu rock-clinger from the "survey" . . .



Another issue in our "thin slice" is a Council stormwater drain that runs into our property. There are several problems with it, one of them being that it discharges into the middle of our property at the top of the hill, eroding the hillface with resultant environmental damage and discharge into the river. When I raised this with Council staff informally, the response was "bad luck, you bought it like that". I guess it was this sort of approach that led to them being fined \$60,000 in court for repeated discharge of raw sewerage into the river further downstream. I'm doing what I can to mitigate the drain erosion and damage with my own planting but I don't think that will be the end of the story.

When I read reports in this magazine and elsewhere, there are obviously rivers in far more trouble than the Hautapu, but small daily reminders of issues confronting it reinforce how much effort is needed to address the challenges to fisheries and the environment around the country. As long as people continue to care, there is hope for things to improve. A recent good news story from across the Tasman was cause for celebration. After 28 years of hard work, in June 2023, the Tasmanian Inland Fisheries Service announced the functional eradication of European Carp from Tasmania. In 1995, carp were dubiously smuggled into Tasmania from the mainland (where they have pretty much become a lost cause). Inland Fisheries swung into action and closed Lakes Sorrell and Crescent, where the outbreak was reported, to contain the problem.

A range of measures were deployed, including intensive gill netting, biotelemetry, electro-fishing, spawning habitat barriers and trapping. In one sense it's an incredible success story. In another sense, it's sobering that it took 28 years to eradicate the carp from just two lakes. For me, a big part of the lesson is to act as soon as possible, before the problem spreads too far and gets out of control.

To remind myself it isn't all doom and gloom, I went down to the Hautapu the other day for a bit of a "survey" – two weeks into the new season, it had finally cleared enough to fish. I found three fish rising, rose all of them, hooked and landed two. Maybe we are living in a thin slice of paradise after all . . .



Willow Grubs: a
tiny but beneficial
result of controlled
willow growth
from the flyfisher's
viewpoint (opened
gall and grub,
with galled leaves
overset)



... and a Hautapu brown



Trout with New Potatoes, Baked Beets and Horseradish Mayonnaise

WILD TO THE TABLE, with Tony Smith



The start of summer brings on rapid growth and nothing grows quicker than horseradish. It is not that well known in the New Zealand garden and can sometimes be found growing wild, as it can get away a bit. Looking a bit like dock leaves it is best grown down in a corner where it can be let go somewhat wild but is easily dug up and removed should it spread a bit far.

Horseradish is however one of the very best ingredients to use with trout or salmon and has been used as such for centuries. As horseradish grows and matures it grows a long skinny parsnip looking root. If you have no access to fresh horseradish, look for a good quality horseradish sauce in your local food store. One such sauce made in Canterbury is 'Mandy's Horseradish' and it is very good.

Horseradish, growing above and harvested right – one of the very best ingredients to use with trout or salmon





INGREDIENTS

A 1kg trout or salmon filleted and pin-boned (bottom right), each fillet cut into 4 portions
 30g butter and a drizzle of oil
 6 small new potatoes
 4 small beets
 1 bay leaf
 1 egg yolk
 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
 1 tablespoon wine or cider vinegar
 2 tablespoons water
 ½ teaspoon salt
 A pinch of white pepper
 100ml sunflower or similar oil
 A few fresh horseradish roots or 2 teaspoons shop-bought horseradish
 1 fresh lemon
 Salt and pepper for general seasoning
 A few salad leaves and fresh herbs to garnish





Place the beets into a baking dish, add the bay, along with $\frac{1}{2}$ a cup of water. Cover with foil and bake at 160 °c for around an hour. Test with a skewer for tenderness, let cool a little then peel, keep aside. Boil the potatoes with a teaspoon of salt until tender, keep aside.

Place the egg yolk, mustard, vinegar, salt, pepper and water into either a stick blender mixing vessel or a food processor. Mix well and with the machine running add the oil in a steady stream to make a base mayonnaise. Finely grate the horseradish and add a tablespoon to the mayonnaise. Keep a little horseradish to grate over your plated dish.

When ready to serve season and fry the trout fillets with the butter and oil.

Cut the cooked beets into small wedges, season a little and squeeze over a little lemon juice. Place onto 4 plates along with the salad. Slice the potatoes and arrange onto your plates. Place 2 fillets onto each plate and spoon over the horseradish mayonnaise. Grate some fresh horseradish over each to add a final touch of piquancy.

Notes; a simple horseradish cream can be made by mixing horseradish into Crème Fraiche or good quality pre-made mayonnaise from your supermarket. You can use preserved or tinned beetroot, I personally like it freshly baked.



WILD TO THE TABLE

Tony Smith was born in Dunedin, educated in Temuka, Alexandra and Gore, and has been a professional chef for more than 40 years. A keen outdoorsman and conservationist, who loves trout fishing and small game hunting, Tony sees himself as a typical Kiwi bloke – a fan of rugby, BBQs, beer and wine, with a penchant for NZ's Pinot Noirs. Copies of his book, *A River Rules My Kitchen*, are still available on TradeMe. Contact: riversmith55@gmail.com



A black dog with a red collar is seen from the side, looking out from the edge of a white boat. The dog is positioned in the bottom right corner of the frame. The background is a vast lake with a large, vibrant rainbow arching across the sky. In the distance, there are green hills and a forested mountain under a blue sky with scattered clouds.

Oh yes, Mum! Bring it in quick! I want to wrap my snaggleteeths around that rainbow!! Lake-Kuratau (Johnny Gummer)

Fishing For FUN!

All views expressed solely by Jaime & Tarn Fitzgerald





*"Dreaming of Fish & Deer". Jaime & Tarn (Tanemahuta, 3 year old Lab x GSP) hard at work after a big back country adventure.
(Johnny Gummer)*



I can still remember being not much older than 5 when my Dad picked me up by the collar of my old school life jacket in an oversized wetsuit, threw me on his rubber ducky yellow Lancer and said, "Come on Kid, we're off fishing."

Born and raised in Tairāwhiti, Gisborne, that was the norm: gather a kai moana firstlight; share with the Rickard and Mclean whanau; and go home for a mid afternoon moi. Fishing was enjoyable and fun and I garnered a love of the saltwater, the rivers and the surrounding wilderness, from an early age.

We lived overseas in Chile, South America and on the west coast of Canada on Vancouver Island, with these vast and deeply enriching cultural experiences and a deep love for the te ao māori world view garnered from a young age being up the marae on the east coast; it really shaped my mind as a young person and of the nature and landscapes around me.

Fast forward to my early twenties, I always knew I was a bit different, a bit weird perhaps. Not into clothes or clubbing like other friends my age, I longed to be in the bush, outside skiing, snowboarding, hunting or fishing or playing music. So off I went, often alone with a dog and a rifle, or my Dad and I walking or flying into the hills with my guitar in tow, into some of the most remote back country bush NZ had to offer.

It was fun, challenging and character building and I knew it would take some time to find like-minded young people to share these adventures with too. I did every bush, hunts and fishing course I could get my hands on.

I was in the Wairarapa at the time when my old man said go hit up the local fly fishing club they'll teach you some more and be a bit more patient with you. So off I went to meet Secretary John Pansters from the Wairarapa Fly fishing Club. I did a 6 week fly tying course, followed by a 12 week fly fishing component; I mostly caught the grass, and the trees, but then John took me to Waipawa and I landed my first few fish. I was hooked.

I made some new friends- albeit 40 years older than me, but we'd often go out after work to the local Ruamahanga or in the weekends, to the Waipawa in the Hawkes Bay. It was such a fun time.

My work mates would often ask me if I caught anything, and I'd reply I caught fun. They'd laugh mockingly, but for me it was so much more than the fish: it was the journey, the planning, the learning, the camaraderie and stories, and the people I met along the way.

The club suggested I go pay for a day with a lovely and vivacious young lady Teresa "Terra" Bielby in Turangi. So off I went to meet 5'5" Terra – the tiniest, cutest lady I'd ever met. She told me about her Swiss partner and her 3 legged dog Stanley, and we had a great day or two together hooking my first Tongariro Rainbows!

She said I should meet her work mates AB & Conor, the shop manager, who was a marine engineer and Shop Dad Neil, and Shop Uncle Tim. So after meeting everyone it came to my attention that Conor and I were running around in nappies, getting looked after by the Rickard Whanau back in Tairāwhiti all those years ago! Talk about a small world.

We all went out night fishing over the next few nights and I saw what rising browns and insect hatches were and I was dying to take my new knowledge into the back country with my dog and spot a trout by myself. That summer I caught my first Tongariro fish unaided with my Dog Tarn, and it was such a great cumulative effort of years of lessons, learnings, failure and fun!

Broken rods also mean broken hearts and I'd had a fair few of those by now. Conor and Teresa were scheming that I should meet their mate Johnny. My intention was only friendship, but after a Turkish meal with the 6'5 giraffe himself, I fell in love – or say grew in love and he fell for me – to my height.

I liked him so much that I bought a Sage rod and reel – talk about hook line and sinker! Our adventure began, sending us into lots of back country fisheries, adventuring the South Island, hunting the roar, all with our little 2'2 dog, Tarn and our 6'5" giraffe, Johnny.

I used to look at pictures of other adults, my parents, grandparents, friends of friends, people happily married and wondering why can't I have that. And in a moment where I wasn't looking, I truly found my best mate. Love is really something. A bit like Trout fishing...when you're not looking – ta da – you'll spot em!

So my fishing nuance and shabby style continued to improve when we flew into a back country location and Johnny who is a professional fly fishing guide and me an avid recreational hunter swapped roles for the whole week. That was really special.

I was dead keen on getting a back country fish all by myself and he was dead keen on getting a deer with Tarn. Lo and behold, we did it! The joy was unfathomable- I cried again- as I'd ballsed up the first attempt with a dry dropper combo the day we arrived and Johnny shot a deer we couldn't locate on the first night. By day 4 we were away laughing.

*When all the 'stars align'.
Super happy with this
backcountry rainbow!
Well spotted, Tarn dog!
(Johnny Gummer)*





New places, new trout tactics & new friends (L-R: Cian [Irishman], Duncan [American], Paul [Kiwiman] and The Godfather, Tony Entwistle) – that's what I call fishing for Fun!!

I continued my learning and for my 30th birthday I got given a 3 day Trout Tactics course in Murchison, with the legendary Tony Entwistle. It was absolutely awesome. I meet Cian, Paul & Duncan – some super enthusiastic anglers – and we learn heaps, and went to fish the Maruia, the Mangles and other local waters. Johnny and I even went and had a look at the Owen. It was so much fun to explore different country. I have signed up again to another 3 day course in February, this time in St Arnaud, with a chamois hunt tacked on to the end!

I've since just moved to the Manawatu and am about to do my second hunts course with the Manawatu NZDA, I'm so looking forward to learning deeper yet again and putting some dedicated time and practice in to my hunting again. With the rising cost of food, the veggie garden planted, harvesting our own meat and fish is the way to go I reckon.

You're never too late, or too knowledgeable to learn, from a mate, from a course or from a tutor. There you meet like minded and fun open people who are keen to share their knowledge and skills and time often in an inclusive and welcoming environment. How lucky are we to enjoy our beautiful and plentiful Aotearoa, I hope you can enjoy it for fun and food.

So after all that maybe I wasn't fishing for fun, I was fishing for joy, companionship and friends. That's what I got, and I hope you can too.



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Campout Deluxe

Cruising The Mainland with Zane Mirfin



South Island angling pressure has had a lot of press lately with NZ Fish & Game implementing their Designated Waters regulations for 2023. Whether these will achieve much is yet to be seen but it is sure to spread angling effort far & wide...

Last summer, North Island friend Johnny Gummer of Palmerston North (Altitude Flyfishing www.altitudeflyfishing.com) and I went on an awesome fishing/camping adventure together in the heart of foreign angler fishing territory. My latest fishing innovation was a 4m by 7m tarp from TM Covers of Nelson (www.tmcovers.co.nz). Made of heavy grade industrial trucking material, with double eyelets spaced around the perimeter every 500mm, and the stealth grey colour, it makes for a poachers delight. Part of the idea is to be able to stay onsite while dominating great fishing locations, partly to be more efficient, but also to save on fuel costs and have more fun by travelling less. All the associated camping and cooking gear goes into my 5'x4'ft shuttle trailer while fishing gear for day trips is stashed in the vehicle. It's an awesome system and my theory is that if you can't beat competing anglers to the water, then maybe you should join them!

Johnny and I had long talked of the Lewis Pass fishery and it was about 1am that we had the tarp up and climbed into our sleeping bags, before realising that we had camped in absolutely the wrong location, with heavy traffic noise and truck engine braking! Morning came fine and clear and Johnny was up early checking the river and cooking up a storm with great coffee and a hearty cooked breakfast. We started fishing right from our camp and I was keen to let Johnny loose with his euro nymphing techniques on the challenging road-side fishery that is heavily fished. Every year there are big trout caught, but they are rarely stupid. Johnny is one of the best anglers I know but even he was humbled by these fish. Hitting full stride he caught some beauties and we had a great time out fishing together. Johnny is young enough to be my son but we were like two old buddies out on the river sharing stories, thoughts and technical strategies. It's always special when you can learn from each other and several times Johnny caught trout I thought were pretty much impossible targets. One time he didn't think my traditional drifts were quite right to a fish we could see in a discoloured section of river. Asking if he could have a cast, Johnny stalked closer over the big rocks like a giant praying mantis before making a perfect drag-free presentation at short range. One cast was all it took and Johnny's rod bent deeply on a solid trout.





*Johnny: cooking up a storm;
hooking and landing another
tricky Canterbury fish*



One of the best trout we caught was nymphing deep in a swirling corner pool. Johnny kept adding more lead split shot until he eventually caught the fine Canterbury trout – his first 10lb+er.

That evening we sought a better camping spot. Boyle River has a little DOC camping area and mobile phone reception as a bonus, but the number of European anglers reclining on the wooden picnic tables and sleeping in the back of their vehicles put us off. "If we stay here, we'll have to talk to them", Johnny joked before we drove down a secluded grass track and found a perfect location sheltered behind matagouri bushes on a terrace above the river. Johnny ramped up his fine cooking skills and a classic evening was had with BS and fine ale.

Day Two was another cracker with plenty of trout onsite and not too many other anglers to tap dance around. I had a bit of a challenging day, breaking off a few nice trout on the strike. I guess too much euro-nymphing with a soft rod elsewhere, a bit of wind, and bigger fish was my downfall but Johnny showed me how to do it. I did enjoy catching a fine brown on a low profile foam blowfly and was able to claim that I was the top dry fly angler. One run I especially enjoyed was fished by Johnny while I did the spotting. There were numerous trout in the run which Johnny fished with true mastery. He caught one trout before the next 7 or 8 trout either spooked or totally ignored him. At one hilarious moment, I was commiserating with Johnny from high above, as 4 good trout started feeding behind him. It is an interesting fishery in that many of these trout are so heavily flogged that they have become totally accustomed to anglers and angling pressure and have developed all sorts of defensive strategies to avoid capture. (Sounds exactly like Flaxy Lakes and Canal in the Kaingaroa used to be, Zane, and the Ngongotaha and Waiteti still are. Ed.)

Johnny and I had a wonderful two days together, pioneering some new camping techniques, catching some great trout, and best of all taking on the foreign angler challenge. We have some new fishing ideas & strategies to implement and I just can't wait for this coming summer to do it all again.

Johnny Gummer – chef extraordinaire and great fishing buddy – with his Canterbury 10 pounder, March 2023







Zane Mirfin, Stewart Island Whitetail, April 2023



STEWART ISLAND WHITETAIL DEER HAIR

Stewart Island is a magnificent place – wild, remote, and far from the madding crowd. Best of all, it also has whitetail deer imported from New Hampshire in the USA and first released at Port Pegasus in 1905. Hunters flocking to the Island make up a fair chunk of the economic revenue generated and getting access to private Maori land blocks or public DOC areas is keenly contested. 'Chasing Whitetail Bucks' by John Delury, is the best modern book on Stewart Island hunting and is an epic tome of the prime locations and history of the area.

Mark Preston, is a highly valued Canterbury friend who first asked if I was interested in a "father/son trip" to the Island a few years back. Mark and I had enjoyed several Stewart Island hunting trips together in the past but we both hadn't been back to the Island for 25 years. We'd had South Lords (Tutaekawetoweto) Block booked for 3 ½ years but that is no guarantee of success as the area is now hunted most weeks, year-round these days.

We knew it was going to be tough hunting, but it was great to be joined by another Canterbury mate Richard Goldie, his 16 year old son Angus, Dan Preston (Mark's son), and my son Jake. With only six of us it was an awesome adventure and with great relief we had loaded the charter boat at Bluff Harbour, embarking with no covid casualties. Stewart Island is a long way from anywhere and Foveaux Strait is legendary for rough seas on the passage to the Island. Young Gus got pretty seasick and we were delayed on board, waiting for a chopper to airlift supplies ashore to the Mutton Bird Islands. But when we made it onto the golden sands of South Lords we knew we were going to have a great 10 days together.

When the weather and sea allowed we would head out beyond Lord's Head in our two hired 4 metre aluminium Frewza pontoon dinghies complete with 18HP motors, to catch multitudes of saltwater fish. As far as I know there are no trout on Stewart Island but a few escapees from Patterson Inlet salmon farms are known to get caught from time to time. This trip it was all the usual fish species that got caught: Big blue cod, trumpeter, tarakihi, gurnard, banded wrasse, barracouta, parrot fish, sea perch, even paua. We mostly fished catch & release with jigs, lures, flies, and bait, making the most of the cod & trumpeter as required to live like Kings back at base. The birdlife was amazing, with giant mollymawk seabirds surrounding our boats whilst fishing, and daytime kiwis wandering the forest floor as we hunted.

The Rakiura Hunter Camp Trust has built a series of hunter huts around the Island, and South Lords Hut is a standard 6 bunker that provided comfort and shelter. Four of us all had separate tents outside, while Gus & Richard slept inside and got too hot, especially at bedtime when we had stoked up the firebox with some of the 8 sacks of coal we had transported along with us. We had gear for Africa, and Mark had done an amazing job with the catering including roast lamb, roast pork, and ribeye steak. Plus a few beers for medicinal purposes!



Our April 2023 Stewart Island base



The normal hunting routine was to rise at 5.30am with Mark's rallying cry calling out "Today's the Day". We would head upriver in the boats at daylight and drop individual hunters at nominated locations and all hunt until about 1pm before pickup. Lord's River is something like out of the Amazon rainforest with overhanging forest, dark tannin water, gnarly log and boulder obstacles, plus huge tidal variation in the 8km we could safely travel. The thick jungle-like vegetation makes for very challenging bush stalking and the whitetail deer are a cunning prey that are well able to evade most hunters. Maps, compass, GPS units, and VHF radios are almost mandatory navigation and communication aids and make the chances of getting lost and totally bamboozled less likely. This trip we were fortunate that everyone got a deer, and we were especially happy that the young guys all managed to bag a whitetail each.

Whitetail deer venison is a fabulous meat but the best part of the carcase to a fly fisher is the thick pelt and white buck tail which can tie all sorts of fabulous fishing flies from deerhair cicadas to muddler & clouser minnows. The whole pelt can be used from skin on the hocks through to the face-mask fur for small Comparadun-style flies so I salted down a few skins with huge handfuls of agri-salt from a 20kg bag I had taken for this purpose. Hides were re-salted before we left the Island, folded and dehydrated for transport in a couple of old sacks. Back home I hosed off all the salt, re-fleshed the hides to remove all fat, meat, and tissue, and then washed in a detergent bath outside so bloodstains and dirt was washed off the fur.



This time I used Leder formula and the hides and facemasks were soaked for a couple of weeks, with periodic stirring, turning hides over to eliminate air-pockets, and removing from the tanning formula to scrape membranes off with a specialist fleshing knife. After tanning was complete I hosed all the skins off and hung to drip dry on the clothes line, before pegging the hides out on some sheets of plywood with 12mm staples from a heavy duty staple gun. Some of the hides were treated with leather lube to make them more pliable as souvenirs for the boys, but the fly tying skins were left stiff to be cut into manageable pieces with a utility knife for probably years of great fly tying use by ourselves and our friends.

Maybe it is a lot easier (and much cheaper!) to buy processed deer hair from a flyshop but harvesting and using your own whitetail deer hair is really something special. Already successful this season, for years to come I'll be catching trout on flies tied with Stewart Island whitetail hair and thinking back to our most excellent southern adventure.



*Zane Mirfin, Fly Fishing Guide
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The Leader Nelson Edition

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Neighbourly

Thursday, October 19, 2023

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Delaware Bay access row ends up in court

SAMANTHA GEE, RNZ

A long-running dispute between iwi and recreational boaties over access to Delaware Bay, at the top of the South Island, is now before the Environment Court.

Nelson City Council has sought a declaration from the court that vehicle access to Wakapuaka estuary is not permitted, under the Nelson Resource Management Plan. The estuary has been used as a launch site by the fishing and boating community for decades, due to its safety and proximity to

ramps, and identifying Delaware as an official launching ramp.

None of those options was considered acceptable to all parties. "We've ended up in this position where there have been continued complaints and confusion over time about the use of this area and really council is here today to seek clarity on the correct way to interpret the rules."

Representing Ngāti Tama ki te Waipounamu Trust, Wakapuaka IB Incorporation and Te Huria Matenga Wakapuaka Trust



Nelson City Council is seeking clarity from the Environment Court on the correct way to interpret rules over boaties' access to Delaware Bay, north of Nelson. (File photo)



The boat launch ramp on Maori Pa Rd has been in use since 1842, the lawyer for Delaware Bay Access Group told the court. (File photo)

YOUR BEACH YOUR RIGHT YOUR FIGHT

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Delaware Bay Access Group, on your behalf, is opposing Nelson City Council action in the Environment Court.

THEY MUST BE STOPPED or Lose the lot?

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It's BEETLE BUZZ Time

By Tony Orman

Recent summer trout fishing have been frustrating here in Marlborough. Not so much for the aspects of guides and anglers exerting unceasing, injudicious detrimental pressure on unique back country rivers like the Wairau and a couple of once lovely tributaries, but for the weather.

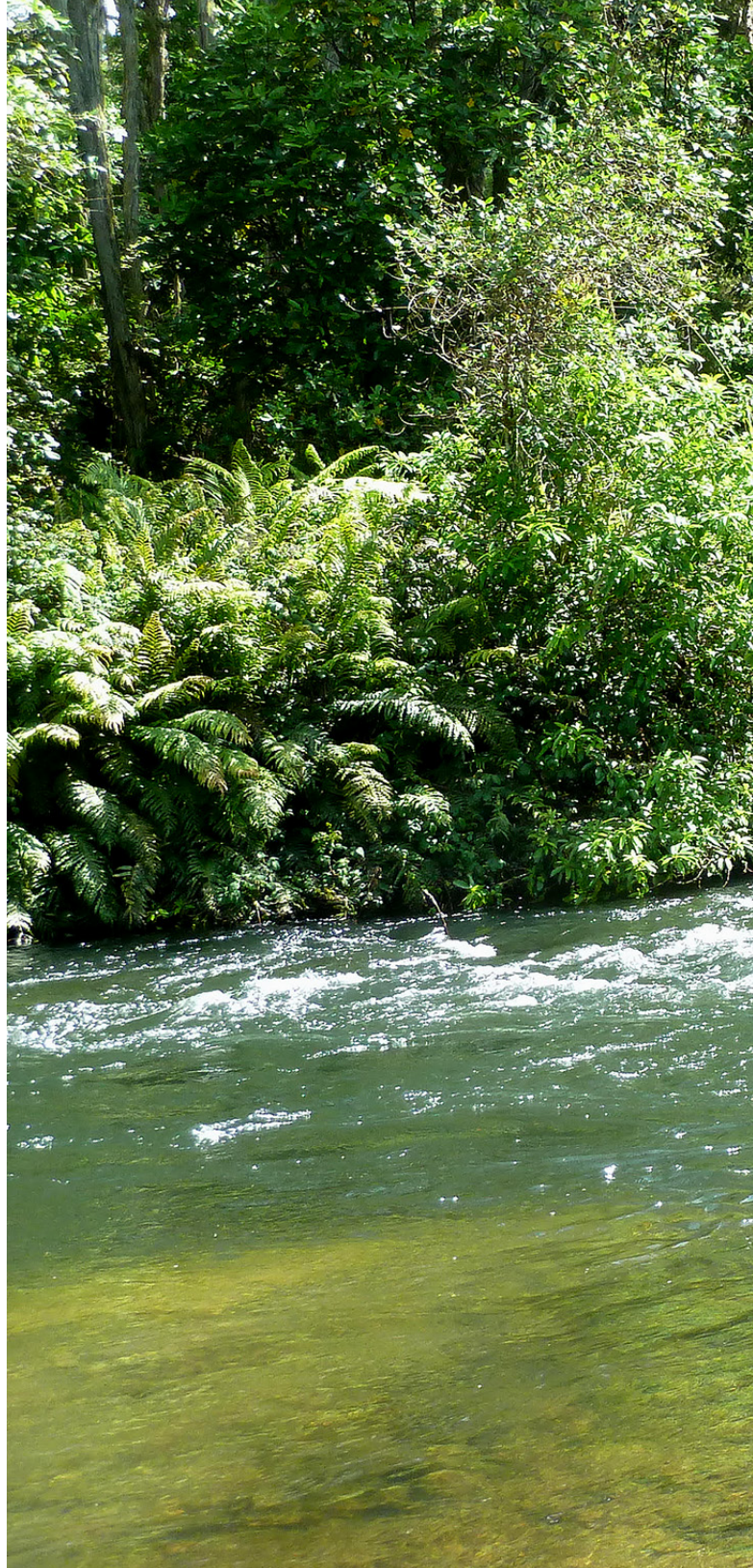
Damn it, climate change is unavoidable. I'm not referring to Man's influence with emissions and the theory of global warming here, but to our El Nino/La Nina-driven weather patterns. You see a favourite time of my trout fishing begins around November, when the brown beetle hatch. Given warm, balmy evenings trout go dotty over the buzzing insects plopping into the river from bankside grass and willows. It's a fantastic fishing time; three or four weeks at the most, but more or less.

I say "more or less" for the reason that over the last few La Nina years, November's weather has been punctuated by cool easterlies, which stifle the hatches. I've got my fingers crossed for this coming El Nino November, that cool easterlies will be few and far between.

BEETLES, LATIN & TACKLE SELECTION

The brown beetle's scientific name is *Costelytra zealandica* but trout don't bother. Nor do I, taking Latin, struggling with it and chucking it in favour of Art. (Stupid youth!) Brown beetle are the bane of gardeners, however, because buzzing swarms can defoliate fruit trees in just a few nights. Orchardists and pastoral farmers hate them too, but trout love them. And I love brown beetle time. On a warm, balmy evening the beetles hatch and can swarm with sometimes a loud buzzing clearly audible in bankside willows. Inevitably a good few drop onto the water. Trout respond quickly and settle into a steady feeding rhythm.

The hatch brings out the very big trout too. In local rivers I've had good hefty browns of 2 kg to 3 kgs – and even bigger. In the half light, it's virtually impossible to see an imitation dry fly but you have a pretty good idea where it is. So when a gentle rise occurs where you guess your fly to be, you don't have a clue how big the fish might be. Several seasons back





on a warm, balmy evening with beetles buzzing everywhere and trout slurping the surface in the half light, I hooked into a fish that I played to just beyond my feet on the grassy bank. By torchlight in the crystal clear water, it looked huge, making powerful circuits of the crystal clear water in front of me. Rod in my left hand I reached with my right for the landing net and it looked puny. Then the giant fish made another surge, I felt an odd resistance and the leader snapped. My reaction was a contrasting mix of disappointment and relief. I would've released the monster anyhow but would definitely remember to pack a larger net next time!

Next morning I returned, mystified as to why the nylon tippet had broken. For night fishing and the greater likelihood of a big fish, particularly at beetle time, I tend to a heavy tippet of 3 kgs or more. Daylight revealed the trout had swam under an underwater old willow branch, embedded in the silt. So on reflection it was a satisfying result – a draw.



IMITATIONS

To the uninitiated the brown beetle weeks can be frustrating. The usual dry flies will not work. I was not even aware of the importance of the brown beetle in the 1960s. It was then I first encountered the brown beetle "hatch" on Hawkes Bay's Tukituki River. Not far from Havelock North, behind Te Mata Peak and downstream from Rochfort Road, there was a big willow tree overhanging a pool. In the half light, I found several fish rising in a steady feeding pattern just below the willow tree. I tied on dry fly after dry fly - the English styled ones such as the then popular Blue Dun, Red Tip Governor and the like - but with no success. It was on a Black Gnat that significantly tended to a chunky body, that I eventually fluked a fine 2 kg rainbow. I took it and at home found the stomach and gullet "chocker" with brown beetles.

I read up a few books. The Coch-y-bondhu dry was talked of as a beetle pattern. Significantly it tended to a fat, chunky body. I tied up a couple of "Cockies" accentuating the fat body of peacock herl. The next evening I caught three fine rainbows – all three stomachs were crammed with brown beetle.

The shape of the fly is undoubtedly a key to imitating the insect. The Red Tip Governor old English styled dry flies are rarely seen in tackle shops today. American patterns based around the Adams and Royal Wulff dominate. However one American fly that ideally imitates the shape of the brown beetle is a size 12 Humpy.

Or you can tie your own version of a brown beetle. Try one made from deer hair, clipping the body to the beetle shape. At front a red brown cock hackle. For the beetle back, brown raffia is ideal. Hook size 12. A wet fly version for day time use is worth tying too; simply a raffia back over a fat body of hare fur, ribbed with copper wire, to imitate drowned beetles coming down with the flow.

JUST HALF AN HOUR?

The brown beetle rise is quick and over perhaps as short as 30 minutes? So don't mess around. It's good planning to get to the river ten minutes or more before twilight, but don't fish immediately. Sit and wait for the hatch to begin and trout to begin and settle into a steady rising pattern. I try to select a pool, usually with willows or long grass near the water and get into position early and just wait as it gets darker. Positioning yourself is important at dusk. From a generally eastern bank location, the after-glow of the sunset reflected on the water allows you to see rises.

Even then, fishing in poor light can mean you don't see your fly on the water but you know roughly where it is. Cast above a rising fish, watch and if a fish rises about where you guess your fly to be, pause "one, two, three", then tighten. On hooking into it, try to lead the fish downstream so as not to scare any others.

Don't switch a torch on until netting time. If you have wisely led the fish downstream a bit, it will not matter using the torch to net it. A head lamp is ideal so you can have both hands for rod and net to use.

Prospect and familiarise yourself with the water or pool during the daylight hours. In the dark you don't want to step into deep water should you chance to wade!

Since my "discovery" of the brown beetle hatch on the Tukituki, I've found the brown beetle rise can happen just about everywhere – season allowing it.

Both browns and rainbows feed on the buzzing banquet. Apart from the Tukituki, I've used it on the Maretotara (Hawkes Bay,) the Manawatu, Mangatainoka, Ruamahunga, Canterbury's Styx, the Wairau and Motueka Rivers and others.

Let's hope this November the brown beetle rise eventuates. And if it's already over by the time this reaches you? Well, these patterns – maybe dropping to #14 but it depends on the region – will work through December and January, as manuka trees flower and the Green Beetle replaces the Brown . . .

Hook into issues that matter on the NZ Federation of Freshwater Anglers' Website <https://nzffa.com/>





The Mighty Grey

By Ken Dalzell

Here is a river that I have viewed almost daily throughout my life. I have helped to clean up the town of Greymouth following its many floods in that time. It has been merciless in its endeavor to disrupt normal daily living along its banks and a lot of towns upstream have suffered the same fate. It has almost won, with mayors and council threatening to move it south out of the flood zone, but the town is now well defended by a flood wall which encompasses the majority of the living and trading area.

The Grey is one of the longest rivers on the West Coast, rising close to the east/west boundary. One of the most pristine reaches is found by driving through farmland via Palmers Road. I visited this spot in my teens with dedicated worm fishers who had their secret pickup of bait on the way up, not the garden type but the long milky bush worms found under bracken bush. They probably procured close on a kilo as we were camping up there for three days. Some of the members would bait the hole first then send a weighted trace of lead conduit and wait for the take. To a dedicated fly fisher, this was a scandalous way to fish but how times have changed, with rolling legering of egg or prawn to fish at the Waitaki canals. I must admit it was an easy way to get those monsters which hugged the bottom, waiting for food washed down in the current.

Downstream at Totara Flat, the Big Grey joins the Little Grey. The trout here always fought well due to the runoff which created long runs and some of the largest fish were taken from here regularly. The river did not escape salmon ventures and one in particular was sited in dredge holes up the Little Grey, at Mawheraiti. When the Coast gets heavy rainfall, a flood is going to happen, and all creeks and upper catchments prove how vulnerable local habitat is. Those salmon were flushed out, some were retrieved from farmers paddocks and the remainder were lost. Later during the spawning season, many fish were seen but being nearly all females destined for the hospitality trade, they were a wasted resource.

Downstream towards Totara Flat the Rough River enters the Grey, reached on the back road from Ikamatua. Here lies a beautiful river of large/medium granite boulders and perfect for spotting fish from the beech-lined tree banks. The river shows evidence of major floods destroying farmland, but the huge pools can be accessed by contacting the numerous farmers, who provide good roading once permission has been granted.

Further down at Ahaura/Matai the river provides similar conditions to fish and the next area is Blackball where the recent dredge is sited. (During the gold era, many dredges operated in the valley, winning rich gold from eons of deposits bought down by glaciers and floods.) Here and once again, perfect conditions for spinner or fly should reward the angler.

A night rise on the Grey is not to be missed. Starting on the Little Grey on the west side (true right bank) and simply at the back road bridge, then the confluence of the Rough River and finally arriving at the turnoff left of the Blackball town sign. Those old favorites Red Tip Governor and/or Kakahi Queen always rewarded me with strikes, sometimes twice at once.

Continuing along the back road towards Greymouth, the next vantage place is opposite The Arnold confluence with the Grey River. The upper access starts with a slow, deep pool and gathers speed towards the Arnold confluence. Occasionally salmon are taken in this stretch of water, as quiet runs have occurred in the upper catchment towards Haupiri and via the Ahaura River catchment for many years.

Between Stillwater and Greymouth the angler can access many further fishing areas, as the back road virtually follows the river to the mouth at Cobden on the north breakwater (as do others at Blaketown to the south). Huge trout, many over twenty pounds, have been taken from the lagoon where factory offal was deposited but i believe this practice has stopped.

Should you visit the Coast this year, take time to stop and fish one of the spots mentioned. You will never regret it.



A man wearing Orvis Pro waders, a cap, and sunglasses is wading in a river. He is holding a fishing rod in his right hand and a net in his left. Water is splashing around him. The background shows a river, mountains, and a blue sky with clouds.

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The Kosciuszko forest, battered and charred after the 2020 bush fires, while Mother Nature continues the rebuilding phase . . .

Risking it all

By Matt Hoole



The Kosciuszko National Park was awakening to its familiar pitches and calls, the sounds of laughing kookaburras and warbling magpies, that characterise the forest and make it feel alive and special. It was just above freezing and the sun, almost up, providing just enough light to no longer need the headtorch. I could now just make out everything around me and was beginning to warm up, as I made the final descent down to the river. I was excited and full of confidence, knowing I had a full day on the river to myself. It was the last day of the brown trout spawning run of 2023 and the end to the NSW fishing season.

I'd left Canberra at 4:30am this morning with a smooth run up to the Snowy Mountains. There's always little traffic on the road at this hour, other than the odd heavy truck and trailer going about their mornings work. The chance of a kangaroo bounding onto the darkened road kept me on edge while the coffee had time to take effect.

Scanning the Eucumbene River for the first time, it looked picture perfect; full and flowing fast, but with a slight milky colour. Conditions like this are generally when the river fishes at its best during the spawn run. The browns are entering the river, actively feeding on their way up, and you don't have to be as precise in your presentation or too selective in what you're throwing at them.

After rigging up, my line was shortly in the water with a Hare & Copper bomb and an egg trailing. The first fish came to the net in little time, a beautiful 3lb hen with magnificent markings, reminiscent of this time of year. After taking some good photos, she was released to continue her journey up the river.

Minutes later, my indicator was yanked down mid current. This ensured a great tussle with a cranky jack, which tried desperately to pull away down the rapids. Just when I thought he may have been getting the better of me, thrashing his head around on the surface like a sea serpent, I managed to slip the net underneath him. A solid, spotted specimen, with plenty of spawning colour and a trade mark hooked jaw.



The fishing continued, with another couple of fish taken from the opening pool, before I reasoned I should be moving on. I didn't want to be overtaken and have the water fished ahead of me. Today, I was on a mission!





I pushed on full steam ahead, arriving at the tail of a promising-looking pool . . .

After catching a few smaller browns, I sat down for lunch. The fishing had proved so productive early on, which had made it hard to stop, take a breather and soak everything in. This section of the river reminds me of being in the Rocky Mountains. The landscape changes dramatically, from lush green alpine bush, made up predominantly of Eucalyptus and Gum trees, to broken-up rocky outcrops and formations. Surrounded by burnt out vegetation from the 2020 bush fires, the charring is still evident on its trees. It's rugged, hostile, and requires your full attention. Even the slightest gradient can result in slipping on scree and sliding down towards the turbulent water below.

I pushed on full steam ahead, arriving at the tail of a promising-looking pool. Right there in front of me sat two big browns, pushing close to the double digit mark. Here's my moment! Without hesitating, I stripped out some line and lobbed it ahead of them, high sticking the line back down. My flies swung wide of the fish, and they didn't see it.

Anticipating how my flies had swung in the fast water, I cast again, inside and closer to the bank. This time my flies drifted right into the fishes' path, but there was no movement as it passed by the two browns. As soon as my line drifted past them, almost out of the tail-out of the pool, one of the fish turned downstream and absolutely smashed my fly! Setting the



hook firmly, I felt solid weight, knowing immediately I was into a great fish! Gunning it down the rapids, I chased after it trying to hold my composure.

Gradually, I eased it back across towards the near bank, while wading downstream in knee deep water. I reasoned, if I could just stay in contact with him, I had a chance! The force of the fish felt so strong as I leaned into the backbone of the rod for help. I was gaining some leverage, but had to let him go again to avoid snapping my tippet. He continued to drop downstream, again and again using the swift turbulent water to his advantage.

Then suddenly, I was in trouble! The fish had wrapped my fly line around a shrubby tree, and I was stranded in chest deep fast water, gradually getting pulled out into the main flow. Panicking slightly, I tried climbing up a rocky outcrop, being my only lifeline. I was almost up, when my right boots metal clip became stuck on the landing net. I tried kicking it free but couldn't release it. I kicked harder and in doing so, my hand slipped from its grasp off the rocky ledge, hurtling me down into the white water below. My first thought was, "what have I just done!"

Hitting the icy water took my breath away. It felt like being pricked by a thousand needles! My waders were filling up fast, which is always your biggest concern when taking a fall in the river. However, my survival instincts kicked in, knowing I was in an extremely dangerous predicament, a level of calmness swept over me, as I quickly sought out a plan. A quick judgement to see out the worst of the current, before trying to exit at the tail of the pool.

However, the river had other thoughts, with the current slinging me away downstream in seconds, bashing my knees and feet on rocks on the way down. That was when fear rushed in. Feeling powerless against the raging waters of the river, I could see my wife and kids, the thought of not returning back home tonight, and my boys growing up without their dad. I couldn't let that happen! Like many survival accounts before me, the comments made in reference to one's adrenaline rising to extreme levels in a life or death situation, couldn't hold any truer.

Swinging down towards the tail of the pool, I then took my opportunity to get out. Swimming, kicking and thrashing around, while trying my hardest to stay afloat. My waders were now really pulling me down, like a cork bobbing up and down in the ocean, I had to fight beyond all measures! Seconds felt like minutes, I could literally smell my own fear now! Then I was out. Just like that, clawing my way back up onto the river bank.

I looked downstream below me. Seeing just how close I'd come to going down the next set of rapids, the likelihood of surviving would have been extremely grim.

I lay on the bank absolutely drained, then struggling to my feet, realised I was still holding my rod and more remarkably, the big brown trout was still on. In many ways with the cold setting in, I probably should have cut my losses and headed straight back to the car. However, with adrenaline still pumping, I wasn't finished with my catch.

I clambered dangerously around a ledge, like a sodden Eskimo, trying desperately to coordinate myself, to regather my fly line. Just when I thought my luck couldn't have gotten any worse, I could see my fly line hanging precariously over a bluff, wrapped around a tree. What made the sight so unbearable, I could see the big brown stranded on a tight line drifting back and forth below me, without anywhere to go. I felt so close!

I tried various things to release the line, to no avail. Then without due thought, whacked at the branch impatiently with my rod tip, snapping the rod clean.

The only stroke of given luck in doing this, was it allowed my rod tip to dangle ninety degrees down in front of me and I could grab it to retrieve my fly line. "I've got it", I yelled! My heart rate shot up, like a mad man possessed, I hastily traced the line all the way down to the water's edge.

Without contemplating, I began pulling the fish up by hand, holding the nylon only. Reaching out with net in hand, the fish flipped over the edge of the net, then flopped back down to the bottom. He looked completely beat and I had to confess, so was I!

"This time I'll get him!", I muttered. Repeating it as he came to the surface, I reached out again with the net. I was so close, so close, but then he saw me! There was a moment when our eyes met and I could almost sense his reaction, "not this time buddy!" He pulled back in one quick motion, snapping my tippet clean, leaving me holding onto a naked piece of nylon, on my hands and knees in despair.

I had nothing else to do, I reeled in, collapsed my new 5 piece rod and made tracks back to the trail, knowing I had to get out of these wet clothes immediately and get dry. One



life threatening situation had passed and now suddenly I had another to contend with, hypothermia!

I stumbled my way back up to the trail, slipping and sliding several times as coordination was abandoning me. Finding the trail, I trudged my way back like a Bigfoot lost in the snow. It's a dangerous place to be, being that wet and cold after undergoing something life threatening. Your mind starts to shut down, and you have to concentrate on pushing one foot in front of the other, towards safety.

Arriving back at the ute, I was so relieved that I had packed a spare change of clothes. Stripping off, I quickly got into dry clothes. Sitting in the ute with the heater blaring, I could instantly feel my body begin to warm and despite the burning sensation, it felt like one of life's greatest pleasures, just to be dry and warming up again. Feeling quite numb and shocked over the experience, I took some time to regather myself, before loading up my gear and getting back on the road.

Pulling into Cooma for a break, I welcomed a warm pie and cappuccino at the local cafe, before calling my wife and telling her about my ordeal. I was quick to confess, my confidence and desire to catch a large fish during the spawning run, had pushed me to extremes. I hated telling her that I had risked it all for that fish, but although worried, she understood and with that, the disappointment faded. In losing this fish, I had gained a valuable lesson, an experience that will never leave me, and a feeling of luckiness just to still be here with those I love, and the chance to have another crack at a fish like that.

You're never completely safe out on the riverbanks, especially when alone. The experience has changed me and my way of thinking. I feel blessed to live to tell the tale.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS EXPERIENCE:-

1. Take a dry bag with a spare change of essential clothes in case of a fall in the water. (Spare underwear, thermal layers, gloves & socks, warm upper layer, microfibril towel).
2. Always carry an emergency Personal Locator Beacon (satellite maps are a bonus); <https://www.locatorbeacons.co.nz/>. Carry it on you at all times for quick accessibility. On your body or in your vest or waist pack, not in your backpack (in case you were to lose your backpack).
3. Take enough fluids and food for a day trip. A Lifestraw is a great addition; <https://www.mountainwarehouse.com/nz/>. Keep them accessible for easy access.
4. When fishing in AU, take a snake bite kit. Wintertime is perhaps the only time it's not required.
5. Don't forget sunscreen and insect repellent in the warmer months, a hat and long layers to properly cover the skin.
6. Be careful around the banks. When alone, be sure to take your time and calculate the risks. If the risk assessment is greater than a 7/10, don't do it!
7. Be careful wading or crossing the river. Determine depth, stability of the bottom and how fast the current is. A wading stick is a useful tool to carry.
8. Ideally go fishing with another person. It provides that extra hand and layer of safety in case of an emergency.
9. Always have a backup pack in the car waiting. Spare change of clothes, food and water.
10. And finally, the one I'll never forget, never risk your life for a fish!

Stay Safe!

Matt Hoole, back at the ute, worn out, but safe in dry clothes and showing clear signs of relief, is a keen fly fisher and ambassador for www.iloveflyfishing.kiwi covering the ACT and NSW regions of Australia. Check him out on @ventureout_nz on Instagram and VentureOutNow on Etsy.



*Treated with due respect, the Eucumbene River
spawning run offers rewarding sport*



The Swedish Thing

By Garrett Evans

Buck Lanham and Ernest Hemingway were great friends. Buck used to come to my mother's cocktail parties, in Paris, when we were stationed there in the 50s. At one he regaled everyone with the gist of a telephone call from Hemingway, who had rung him in Washington DC, from Cuba, at 3am in the morning:-

"Buck, how are you?"

"Hemingway, do you realise that it's 3am in the morning!"

"Yeah, I got it."

"You got what?"

"You know, the Swedish thing!"

"Are you telling me, Hemingway, that you've got the Nobel Prize for literature?!"

"Yeah, that's it!"

"Damned wonderful!"

The dialogue may be slightly different, but it's close. The exact wording can be found in Professor Carlos Baker's major book on Hemingway's life. I was given an acknowledgement in this major Princeton University work; maybe one of my better achievements in modern scholarship. In the process I found many of Hemingway's army friends for Professor Baker. He said I had put him onto a gold mine.

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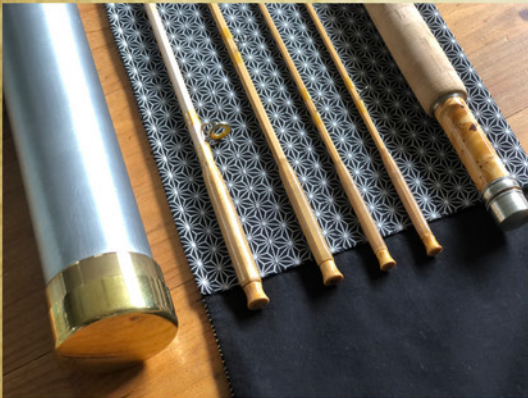
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