

TROUT FISHER

Fly-focussed but totally transferable

Winter 2024

Confessions of an Addicted Salmon Angler ~ Hopper Addiction
Truly Wild ~ Living The Dream ~ Fish Statistically
Fishing in Secondhand Bookshops



THE FUTURE IS IN THE WATER
Pollution of New Zealand's Rivers & Lakes

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Once known for its bountiful population of trout, flounder, eel, whitebait, and many other food sources, Ellesmere has been destroyed by phosphorus and sediment . . .

Todd Storey visits Lake Ellesmere, 11 4 2024.



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I'd been dreaming about this trip all summer while on holiday up in the Coromandel, and now I was actually doing it. The idea was to go truly wild this time with the few simple parameters being to adventure, packraft and fly fish.

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You know you're on island time when you find yourself wandering with nothing but a pair of shorts and a fly rod, the coral sands massaging your feet as you stalk the various flats for your quarry, tuning into the surroundings and just letting things happen – unplugged but connected.

By Simon Hoole



Fishing in Secondhand Bookshops 38

This year I came across a couple of most unusual fishing books. One is quite an incredible book, "The Feather Thief", about an obsession with tying trout and salmon flies. It's so wacky it might be a tall fishing story - except it's true.

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POLLUTION OF NEW ZEALAND'S RIVERS AND LAKES 42

New Zealand once had the reputation of being the world's top fly fishing destination. A number of the top USA anglers told me they were no longer coming to NZ, however, as we do not look after our rivers, streams and lakes.

By John Kent

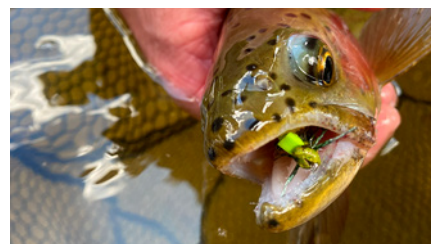


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Typically dry fly fishing is all about finesse, with presentation often being the difference between success or spooking fish. However, a hopper is like slapping down steak and chips on the table . . .

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Cover

Visitor Advice, Kaituna Quarry Reserve, Lake Ellesmere, Canterbury. (Todd Storey)

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Lake Ellesmere, 11/4/2024

THE FUTURE IS IN THE WATER

By Todd Storey

Canterbury is home to many of New Zealand's lakes and streams and they have been places where people grew up fishing or exploring. However, these waters have changed over time and the fish that were once abundant, are slowly disappearing.

Lake Ellesmere, also known as Te Waihora, is one of these waters. Located south of Christchurch, Lake Ellesmere is also known to Maori as Te Kete Ika a Rakaihautu, meaning the fishing basket of Rakaihautu, who was a leader who travelled around the South Island after coming to New Zealand with his son (who named the lake after him) on the canoe Uruao.

Once known for its bountiful population of trout, flounder, eel, whitebait, and many other food sources, Ellesmere has now become a lake destroyed by the contamination of phosphorus and sediment, poisoning all food sources within the lake. The lake also has a problem with algal blooms, attributed to both natural and unnatural environmental factors.

So, how have we reached this point. I took a trip along the Little River Rail Track, to see what the lake looked like, what wildlife I could observe and where things were going wrong. Immediately on arriving, I observed a sign stating that there was no swimming, no touching anything in the water nor on the shoreline, no fishing allowed, and all dogs must be leashed and kept away from the water. This is because of the toxic algae which has taken over the lake. However, at first observation of the lake, it could be taken as just a regular lake, muddy around the shore but clearer out the further you went. While other areas of the lake (further out or along the shore) could have displayed large algal bloom present, instead I saw groups of different bird species inhabiting those areas, many feeding from the lake bed. This was interesting to observe, as their presence suggests the birds are both affecting the lake and being affected by the lake.



Royal Spoonbills targeting the shallows, sweeping the lake bed from side to side with open bills. Vibration detectors inside their bills tell them when to shut.



*Kaituna (food: eels) River,
entering the lake and (overset)
a close-up of the heavily
contaminated flow . . .*



As I walked further along the trail, the main and obvious impactor on the lake's deteriorating water quality appeared. The Kaituna River, a major inflow for the lake, once a place to catch eel and whitebait, is now a transporter of toxic algae, and contaminated water ready to be swept into the lake for more animals to consume and live within. This river was one of the worst I had seen in my life of travelling up and down New Zealand, it was as though someone had used a green dye to make it the colour I observed.

How had this once bountiful river turned into the green slush it is today? Well, the Kaituna river starts in the Banks Peninsula, travels through the Kaituna Valley, and ends up discharging into Lake Ellesmere. As it travels through the many twists and turns it must take to get to the mouth of the lake, the river passes multiple farms, many of which from what I saw and since referenced from Google maps are sheep and dairy farms. Both sheep and cattle are big contributors to E. coli. contamination in water, as well as contributing to algae blooms in water sources. Both excrete nutrients like nitrates and phosphates which, over time, can exceed safe contamination levels for humans and animals. This can become a huge problem down the road, as the longer this river transports contaminated water down to Lake Ellesmere, the longer it will take for decontamination to happen. Until then, the over-saturation of contaminant nutrients, and algal blooms, create the potential for more dead creatures, less usage of the lake, and a greater environmental problem within the near future.



One aspect I found interesting about the lake was what used to be. There were a few abandoned structures in the lake, presumably duck shooters' mai mai. All were degrading; some still held their structure, while others were nothing but posts sticking up from the ground. How long had they been there? Were they abandoned because of the algal blooms? If not, would any of them be used this season? If so, would any ducks shot here be safe to eat? It intrigued me.



I also found areas separate from the lake where built-up rain and groundwater had completely dried up and only bare ground was left. This was not surprising, as we had just



come out of a very hot summer, but what did surprise me was the difference in colour and how long these two areas had most likely been dried up. In the photos you can see one is brown and the other is much paler in comparison. While not obvious in the photo, the brown area still had water in between the cracks on the surface, meaning that the water had only just started to dry up. The paler ground had no water whatsoever near the surface, showing that it had been dried out for quite a while. While these little dried up areas may seem meaningless they actually helped demonstrate for me, where we are at in the world now and where we could be in the future with ever-increasing temperatures, greenhouse gases, and population. Little ponds drying up, increasing algal blooms in the river and lake, both are affected and increased by the changing environment in the world and if the trend continues, may increase to a point which is devastating to earth. Imagine rivers and lakes dried up everywhere, leaving the country like the barren waste land out of Mad Max. In that drying process, imagine algal blooms overtaking every lake, river, stream, and creek in this country; their water glowing green like the Kaituna, with dead fish and animals scattered around their shores and waters. This is not what anyone wants for themselves, their elders, nor children.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to push some forward thinking. Something that stayed with me from the exploration and as I write this article is, what will the future be for Lake Ellesmere and what can be done to fix this. Algal blooms have forced the Canterbury Council to install signs to ensure no one nor pets enter the lake but when will these algal blooms finally be taken care of? When will the lake be usable again and what will be the future plan, to ensure the lake remains usable, and that the same thing does not happen again?

While it is fine to place signs around warning people to stay out of the water, I cannot help but be annoyed when I search for anything to update me on how the restoration is going, only to find nothing but sites saying they acknowledged that the lake's health has declined. When looking for new articles, all that pops up are from 7-10 years ago, one explaining how people wanted Te Waihora to be included in water quality plans and another stating that improving Lake Ellesmere would require every dairy farm in the area be to shut down, with negative socio and economic consequences. This suggests that there is no market for discussing major environmental threats within the media, unless it is to scare people.

"The future is in the water, and those who use the lake use it in a way that is mindful of the continuing use for the next generation." This quote by Liz Brown and Sue Poho, is on one of the maps at Lake Ellesmere. It holds deep meaning. That while the water itself dictates the future of the lake, we also have a part to play in managing and using the lake in ways that benefit its future. Rather than letting contaminated water continue to flow and seep into the lake, affecting the lake and its inhabitants, we need to take actions that promote better water for the lake, our animals and for ourselves. This message applies not only to Lake Ellesmere but also to all freshwater within Aotearoa. If we don't make sure its usage is appropriate, where will that leave future generations?

Todd is in his third year at UC, studying Environmental Science and Chemistry.



... Kaituna River, flowing under the SH75 road bridge near Ataahua ...



... and upstream of the SH 75
road bridge.



Confessions of an ADDICTED SALMON ANGLER

By Larry Burke

Part 6: 1995/96 & ANOTHER Surf Rod

All hopes for the 1995-96 salmon season were that it would be the same or better than the previous and so it proved for a lot of salmon anglers, big fish and plenty of them. For me it started really well and early, with good numbers of fish caught in the Rakaia in November. For cousins Martin and Owen, brother Colin, wives and kids, our fishing season started as usual, at Lake Coleridge. We were in those days able to rent for a weekend former electricity workers' quarters at the head of the lake which we did for the 3 day Canterbury Show weekend.

It's one of our favourite fishing spots. Up at five and onto the water at the picket fence, so named as the High Country opening weekend, the first in November, is the busiest of the season on the lake, with several thousand anglers congregating to fish. In those days the picket fence could have more than 100 anglers lined up around the Northwest corner of the lake, mainly targeting landlocked salmon. That sadly is no longer the case. Changes in land ownership and DOC closing what they called illegal batches and camping grounds, have caused a depletion in numbers. Nonetheless, it is still one of the most important days on the North Canterbury angling calendar. There are less landlocked salmon now and rainbow trout are the predominant catch. We often went up there for the opening but show weekend was our preferred time, as were fewer anglers, just diehard ones like us.

One of these weekends in the 1980's is right up there in my memory bank. We had the usual great time, arriving Friday and fishing the dusk. Saturday morning we were at the picket fence right on daybreak. Martin was the first to get his line in the water and he immediately hooked up, landing a nice landlocked salmon while we were calling him a "tin bum" and other things. I then cast out and did exactly the same. That morning, until I stopped fishing at around 1pm I managed to catch the limit bag, which at that time was 10 landlocked salmon out of the 19 caught between us. I moved to let others have a chance to fish the spots I fished but caught fish wherever I moved to and kept changing my lures. It didn't seem to matter what I used, it worked. My reward was having to gut all the fish! A couple of the





salmon were 5lb (2.27kg), being the largest landlocked salmon in the lake for a while. Most averaged 2 to 3 lb (1.36kg).

Back to the 95-96 season, I started after the river salmon at the end of November and did not have to wait long before I caught my first fish. 2nd December I landed a 9.5 lb (4.31kg) tagged hen a 27 inch (68cm) fish with a 16 inch (40.5cm) girth, a nicely-conditioned fish, fishing The Point. I was to fish there all season, except for one trip out to Tentburn.

5 days later in the same spot, fishing among a small line of anglers opposite a larger line about 30 metres away, I hooked into a good fish. It hit hard and did not muck around, heading off down the river with me trying to hold on to it. When fighting salmon you seem to lose track of time and everything moves in slow motion, which it isn't. You lose awareness of what is going on around you as you concentrate on the battle between you and the fish. This fish was one of those and after what seemed an age I managed to get it to come to the surface in front of me and slide it up on the beach. What a fish it was!! A 36 inch (89cm) long, 22.5inch (57cm) girth and 28.5lb (12.95kg) tagged Jack. How long was the fight? I don't know, but I had to sit down for a while to recover. This fish was just slightly smaller in size than the hen of the same weight I caught the previous season.



My next fish was another tagged one; 12.65 lbs (5.75kg), 29 inches (73.5cm), 18.5 inch (47cm) girth. I cannot remember much about this fish except that the weight to length shows that it was an exceptionally well conditioned salmon. My next salmon was well over a month away on the Friday after New Year. My then wife, Eve, needed to do some shopping at the

local mall and came along. We arrived there at 4pm and locked the car. Eve went back to check; something she did at times. We had only been there about 20 minutes and the car was gone. Checked to make sure we didn't park it somewhere else and then informed the insurance company and police. When it had not been found a week later we were paid out and spent about week looking for a suitable replacement and found one we were happy with. (Didn't dawn on me then to look for 4 wheel drive!) Back into fishing, for a while it seemed I had lost the bit of luck you need when salmon fishing.

Meanwhile my son Jeremy, who was now working for Malcolm Bell at The Complete Angler, bought me without my knowledge a 12 foot (3.65 metre) carp Tricast rod blank that Malcolm was importing from Britain to be used as salmon surf rods and having them made up for low mount overhead reels, something I could not use because of ongoing problems with my neck injury. Jeremy informed that he would get it set up for a spinning reel and I needed to work out where I wanted the reel seat and rings. It was assembled by a reel and rod builder/repairer based out of town, who did most if not all the repairs for Christchurch tackle shops. He did a great job.



The rod arrived, looking great. I was using a Mitchell Riptide RT80ss in the surf then (and yes, I still have it in its box, in my used reel cupboard). This reel is aluminium alloy bodied, following my preference for metal bodied reels. The first thing I wanted to do was try casting with it. Jeremy by this time had been around fishing tackle for a while and was well into the low mount rods with overhead reels. We decided to go to the local park where there was a rugby field to test our casting distance. We set up at the east end of the field with the local easterly behind us using de-hooked 56gm tigers, or slices as some call them. We were both spooled with 19lb nylon, me Suffix Synergy, a brand I used until around 2015. I don't know what Jeremy was spooled with but suspect it was the best going. Once we started measuring, using the rod without much effort, I was casting between 88 and just over 90 metres. Jeremy was reaching 100-110 metres, but I was very happy with that.

Next, was to test it in the surf. We decided on Tentburn, even though the hatchery was releasing few smolt there much by this time ,as they were moving towards a closed system. 4th February, think it was, with Colin and maybe Martin. The rod worked even better than I hoped, hooking and landing this 17lb (7.23kg), 32inch (81cm), 20inch (51cm) girth fish.



That Tentburn trip proved the Tricast was a very powerful rod for fighting large fish yet not over-taxing physically and after a good fight I was able to bring in on the surf. The other interesting conclusion from this trip was that it was definitely much easier to cast this rod without strain – and that is important to me because of my neck injury, meaning I could now fish longer without having to stop because of too much pain.

I was less sure about the reel though. I used it for another couple of years thinking about it, was really looking for a spinning reel that had a shorter stem on it to get closer to the rod as my thinking was that would cause less line drag when casting and give maybe more distance. Eventually found one that I thought might fit the bill, this rigid body carbon/titanium D.A.M Quick Finessa S70. It is longer in the body than the Mitchell; and although it appears to have a shorter stem, it hasn't. As you can see it has a slighter bigger spool and is more slanted in towards the rod, giving the line better passage through the first eye. Although 653 gms, it doesn't appear heavier.

These things I did not find until using the set and then thing is there is not the sound you get when casting a spinning rod it is almost silent. That however is in the future. I went home very happy that day wanting to spend more time fishing the surf. Some time later, when fishing there again I made some anglers question their gear as in most conditions an overhead reel will outcast a spinning one every time and some of the anglers with the big rods etc took a lot of pride in casting long distances which if there no head or side wind can be well over 100 metres. However in places like Tentburn where the predominant wind is easterly and it hits you side on when fishing the surf at every salmon river mouth. It tends to cut their casting their casting distance. I noticed one day when out there a couple of these anglers were watching me, wondered why? Carried on fishing then suddenly realised I was out casting them! It was the easterly while it cut their distance it somehow increased mine. Not that I was worried about this I just wanted to get my line out there.

Anyway back to the 95-96 Season, I caught a 10.5Lb(4.77kg) hen 28th of February my 6th fish. Meanwhile I had been applying for full time work and finally landed an interview with Chid, Youth and Family as Reliving Residencial Social worker at a youth justice facility got the job. Which turned out to be anything but reliving involved shift work 24/7 and for me meant a lot of night work at time I was lucky to get 1 more week before starting and managed to catch 2 more fish. The First on the 3rd of March an exceptional fish of 20lb(9.09kg) 34inches(86cm) long And 20.5inch(52cm) girth jack. Had good tussle with it and the following day which turned to be my last managed to get a small 8.5lb (3.86kg) tagged hen. This is the last Glenariffe tagged salmon I caught. The National government of the time decided that they would stop supplying smolt and doing research for commercial salmon farm companies and they should do their own as some of them were already doing. The hatchery was offered to Fish & Game but they turned it down as there was a movement going on that "we only want wild Fish" the reality is they have never been any truly wild salmon in this country and 80% of the salmon in our rivers at that time were either sourced from Glenariffe or Silverstream hatchery. This action started me thinking a bit more about the fishery and it took me to the fourth stage of salmon addiction. It seems to me it goes in stages, 5 so far:-

- To catch a river run salmon.
- To catch as many as you can in a season.
- To catch the largest salmon you can.
- To think more about the salmon fishery and find out everything can about it (this stage never stops).
- To start to do something about improving the salmon fishery.
- There might be a sixth stage but don't think I am there yet.

Looking back, what I took away from the 95-96 season was the condition of the fish. All of them their girth was around two thirds of their length. Meanwhile I was happy to be working, unaware what an upheaval my family life would experience at the end of the year and into the next salmon season.



Whenever conditions seem perfect yet feeding patterns have you doubting your ability . . .

Fish Statistically

Talking Plenty with Peter Storey

Ratropinna. In this fish's mouth and my hand to the right, the sparse clump tail and lightly dubbed rat spine fur looks pathetic but has caught me more trout in this lake than any other tying over the past 25 years – thousands of them. Better still, with or without this spawning-orientated orange bead or a yellow smelting one, it's broken so many blank spells over the same period, that logically, I should never take it off my tippet when fishing on or near the surface at dawn. It's also caught enough fish in the thermocline to make me wonder why I do not leave it on the tippet year-round, whichever fly line that tippet may be attached to. In fact, Ratropinna has caught me trout anywhere smelt are present and, apparently, does so for anyone else I give it to.

The fish around here have remained ultra picky since the last issue and although I spent a lot of time on the river, fishing both the Spring issue emerger and my normal Black Palmer successfully, my log says I landed nothing fishing my normal dawn session during March. That pattern continued into 'the cruellest month' until I began devising this issue's lure which broke the drought. When that too proved inconsistent, however, I reverted to Ratropinna and caught this fish first time out. Autumn smelting is finally kicking in as I wind this issue up, mid-May, but I cannot say the normally fruitful Autumn reef fishing has begun yet. Nonetheless the smelt population is definitely high again and with it, trout condition. Little frost to date but with single figure air temperatures overnight, trout habitat levels are now tolerable from the surface to about 25 metres, where dissolved oxygen levels drop sharply.

Fishing amongst feeding fish, but picky ones, and failing to hook up, morning after morning, even in ostensibly perfect conditions and using your most proven lure, puts doubt in your mind. Over 40 years of trout fishing in these lakes tells me there are plenty of days each month when the fish are nigh-on impossible to tempt. It also tells me there are very few days – I have hit just two so far this season fishing at dawn – when they are so easy to catch that it does not matter what's on the tippet. Mostly however, and this season in particular, I have learnt to accept that most fishing sessions will prove challenging. Accordingly, I fish statistically, following my records and using those statistics to keep me fishing positively, changing tactics logically and until it's clear I am basically wasting time, even if thoroughly enjoying the scenery and the pleasure of casting an optimum-balance-for-purpose set up.





Those records tell me that I catch most fish within a few minutes. They suggest that feeding lake trout will take lures on the majority of days but typically, in bursts lasting no more than a minute. They further suggest these bursts repeat at roughly 90 minute intervals. In between I will typically have fish around me, feeding gently on smelt as opposed to smashing into them. (Frequently, swimming into the canoe as well – and that I cannot reconcile with fickle feeding!) Throughout the main season, then, if I have neither seen nor caught anything within 90 minutes, I stop and rarely fish again that day. In Winter, however, with air temperature to consider as well as water, whenever Ratropinna draws a blank after 15 minutes I switch to an obvious but seasonally-orientated lure, before calling the session off; and here it's time to introduce the other half of my regiment . . .

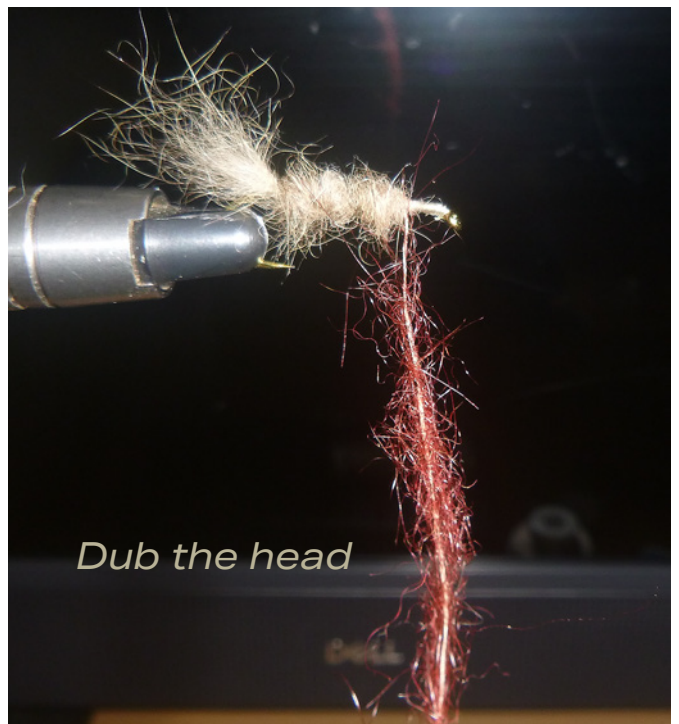
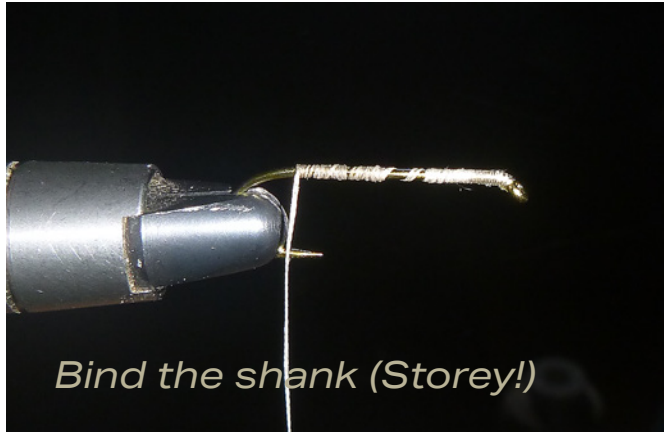
Like all my best-performing flies and lures, Ratropinna's simplicity means it can be tied without a vice. This Winter offering is no different and, combined with last issue's, should provide sufficient tactical indication that, statistically, on any given session, you are flogging the proverbial and it's time to call a halt. Equally nostalgic and intended for fishing among smelting trout, this tying is effectively Ratropinna tied in attractor colours. These colours can obviously also be tied on a grub hook as a direct fertilised roe imitation, however, if preferred. So . . .

The Gloucestershire Regiment was formed in 1881, from the North and South Gloucestershire Regiments, becoming the 1st and 2nd Battalions respectively. The South Gloucestershires were created in 1758, under Major General Granville Elliott, from the 2nd Battalion of the East Kents, who wore buff facings on their redcoats. 'The Springers' retained that buff colour on their facings and combined with the primrose of 'The Slashers', and the general non-Royal regimental black, they completed the club tie of the 1994-disbanded 1 GLOSTERS.



ELLIOTT'S CHOICE

Hook: sequence TMC 5262; fish and my palm H 950 BL; both successful. Thread: pale tan (both 'neutral' Kimono silk doubled). Tail and body: buff dubbing (both the palest fur from a juvenile possum). Head: fiery red dubbing (both seal fur).



Trim and brush out



The best late season fishing is still to come and however challenging it proves, out on the lake up to 30 June or Winter shoreline thereafter, fish condition is high. This ~60cm maturing hatchery jack pulled 2.8kg on the McLean and hit like a ton of bricks after I switched from Ratopinna to this new tie on what had seemed another 'dead horse' dawn session. Change of lures or trout attitude? What mattered was the tactic had worked again and since trout taste best when processed quickly, there was no further need to fish statistically.



Elliott's Choice, in and straight from the trout's mouth – tying sparsely, where Gibson's Choice stands out, and Ratopinna lies halfway, this colour combination becomes ethereal – covering all tactical possibilities on those difficult days . . .





Kiwi Cane 2024

By Nick Taransky

April 19-21 saw the holding of the inaugural "Kiwi Cane", at the Ruapehu Ski Club's (RSC) Turoa Lodge in Ohakune. The feedback received from the participants confirms that the event was a resounding success. Around 25 people attended, with a mix of Kiwis and Aussies. Most of the Aussie contingent were regulars from the "Cressy Cane" Annual gathering that formed the basis of this year's get together.

THE FISHING

My love of cane rods has always flowed from the fishing. Yes, bamboo is beautiful, it is connected to history and tradition, and like tying your own flies, it can add to the experience of catching a fish. But if cane wasn't as good or better than other materials for making rods for the sort of fishing I love (close quarters stalking for trout with dry flies), I wouldn't even have one hanging on the wall.

With this in mind we booked the week before and after the gathering for those that wanted to take advantage of the Ruapehu fishery with their cane rods. Though late in the season for dry fly, plenty of good fishing was had, including some hatches and dry fly action right to the end of the season. Of course, nymphing was more reliable in late April, and all methods from two handed swinging to pulling Woolly Buggers were used to good effect.

Above: Kiwi Cane 2024 – it was hard to go home after such a wonderful event

Right: Peter Hayes fishes with Mt Ruapehu as a stunning backdrop







Another Ruapehu venue, with Hayesie working a corner in heavy flow

For myself, I didn't fish until the event was over, making my last cast to a brown sipping down mayflies on the inside corner of a small pool, on the second last day of the season (29th of April), with my full-actioned 7'7" #4 and a 21 foot leader. For me, it doesn't get any better than that.

THE VENUE

The RSC Turoa Lodge proved to be a brilliant venue. 25 was probably a limit for the numbers in regard to presentation space and accommodation, but we could squeeze a few more in if need be next time. The ski drying room made a perfect space for wader and boot storage and drying, with the bonus of warm boots and waders the next morning. Summer (non ski season) memberships at the club are very economical – check out the club website for more details: <https://www.rsc.org.nz>



The club has accommodation at the Whakapapa village too, making it an ideal resource for fishing holidays (both for Kiwis and international visitors).

Into my last fish for the season, with a deep bend and low angle for maximum control – containing mainly brown trout, many Taranaki and Wellington F&G waters close on 30th April





Chris Fiddes did some "field testing" in the Tongariro on his way home from the weekend gathering



"Bamboo" Dave Hemmings, founder of Cressy Cane





Choose your weapon!



THE RODS

A huge benefit of having so many enthusiasts together is the quality and quantity of bamboo rods available to cast. Well over 50 rods, new and old, were on hand to try out. We split this into two sessions, involving a pre cast discussion, a casting session outside, and then a post casting classroom discussion.

The first session was to contrast "faster/stiffer" rods and "fuller/softer" rods, and how to make the most out of them. The second session was a "show and tell" of rods that attendees had brought along. This was followed by a "speed dating" casting session where people cast with each rod for 2 minutes before moving to the next one, with glass and carbon rods included for contrast. Again, this was concluded with a post casting discussion.

This part of the event proved to be a highlight for everyone. There was some informal "voting" on the most popular rods and tapers at the end. Unsurprisingly, many of these came from the range of #4-5 weights around 7'6" – a sweet spot for cane.

CASTING INSTRUCTION

When it came to the casting and evaluation of rods, we were privileged to be led by Master Casting Instructor and invited international guest, Peter Hayes, from Australia. "Hayesie", is celebrating his 30th year as a full-time guide and casting instructor. His skill as both a caster and teacher made a huge difference to the gathering, as it has throughout the Cressy Cane events.



Hayesie demonstrating different casting styles





Yes, we did some rod-making! Owen Poad getting some "hands on" experience on the planing forms.



THE PRESENTATIONS

With a mix of levels of rodmaking experience (from zero, through people starting out, to those with a decade or more of making), the presentations covered a wide variety of topics. The size of the group meant that all of the sessions provided the opportunity for interactive discussion, something not possible in larger groups, where "lecture" style presentations dictate more "one way" information flow. I'm in the process of updating the Kiwi Cane website with a report and content from the event, but here are just some of the topics that were covered...

- Designing rods for specific requirements with Tim Munro
- Hollow Building Rods with Mark Rampant
- Two Handed Rods with Rob Morwood
- Quadrate (four sided) Rods with David Anderson
- Making your own Wooden Planing Forms on a budget with Mark Thurling
- Australian Rodmaking History with Jim Jones
- How to break a rod (and how not to) with Nick Taransky

Aside from the formal presentations, there were several "around the room" sessions where everyone was asked to contribute briefly on a topic, to make sure that the discussion was fully inclusive.

THE CAMARADERIE

While the rods and formal presentations were very well received, even more so was the feedback on the friendships made over the weekend, particularly in regard to "Trans Tasman" relationships. This stimulated some deep and meaningful discussions on rodmaking and other associated (and unassociated!) topics, well into the evening, over beverages of varying levels of potency! As the person who took the bottles to the refuse station, I can say that first place went to Gin, second to Whiskey, with Red Wine claiming the Bronze Medal!

THE FUTURE

Our plan had been to annually alternate Kiwi Cane with the more established Cressy Cane, with perhaps a gap year in between. But for the time being, while Kiwi Cane looks like being in a growth phase, our thinking is to run another Kiwi Cane next year (2025), followed by Cressy Cane in 2026. More details will be on the Kiwi Cane website soon. I also have some club talks on bamboo lined up this year. If your club is interested in a presentation, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me. I am also running rodmaking classes later this year and again next year, after the three successful classes which ran this March-April.

THANK YOU!

I would personally like to thank all of the people that took the interest to attend this year, and the presenters who helped to make it a wonderful event. Special thanks go to Peter Hayes for his casting instruction and inspiration, David Hemmings for starting the whole concept, and David Anderson for his lovely "Morning Readings" to set the tone for the day. And of course my wife Miri, who is the better half of our partnership in every way!

I hope to see you next year...

nick@taranskybamboo.com

No one went hungry at Kiwi Cane!



Truly Wild

By Ainsley Haslett (aka nzadventurer)



I woke up when I heard a kiwi calling. Looking at my watch it was 0610 – an acceptable time to wake up when an adventure is in play – but still an hour before dawn. Roroa (Great Spotted Kiwi) can sound a bit unexpected the first few times you hear them. Similar to the early brrr call of the Ruru / Morepork although slightly higher pitched, but identification is far easier when you hear the male and female duet, as the shrill repetitive cry of the male clearly differentiates the Kiwi from Morepork. I seem to have become a bird geek and part of that has been training my subconscious to wake up to the calls of my favourite birds: the Kaka, Pukupuku / Little Brown and Great Spotted Kiwi, and the Whio. No training needed for Weka – you can't sleep through their morning song.

I'd been dreaming about this trip all summer while on holiday up in the Coromandel, and now I was actually doing it. The idea was to go truly wild this time with the few simple parameters being to adventure, packraft and fly fish. Camping was off the cards due to the gear weight once I'd included the packraft, so I'd be enjoying DOC huts for this trip. No helicopters meant a fair bit of grunt work over 2 days to get there, and with a big load for the walk in the first couple of days would not be a highlight. That part was behind me now, and I'd stashed a package of food for a later pick up, lightened up the bag, and puffed up the raft for the first of the float sections.

The place is so remote that it's almost unexpected to see anyone else in this area, but it was nice to cross paths with a fishing guide visiting from North America. He was on the walk out after a week in the wilderness. When you've not seen another soul for a week there's a tenancy to chew the ear off the first person you see, and I was that person, but I was excited to hear tales of big brown trout and his epic adventures. Evidently New Zealand's



reputation is sufficiently strong that a professional like him would come out for a month to travel the country and target tricky fish. Despite some challenging conditions he'd caught quite a number of fish, including some he thought were pushing double digits (although without scales that could be another fishy tale). He'd told me about how the magic happened when the main river rose to flood and the big fish pushed into tributaries. The tributaries had otherwise been very challenging in clear weather. Maybe heavy rain is a fisherman's friend? We talked flies and he was kind enough to leave me one of his ties – a PT double bead shimmering from every angle. Now I had thought shine was a no-no for big browns in the backcountry – but this fly was like the Las Vegas Strip compared to most things in my box – could this really work in here? Tinsel over one of the beads at the thorax, CDC at the second bead, and wrapped with pheasant feather and UV flashback. I'm still not convinced on the flashiness but I love the double bead and CDC.

Covering the guide's water was tough and fish were few and fragile. No takers so far. When your first presentation uses a fly in muted colours, unweighted and in size 18, and the fish spooks at the first look then a rethink is required. In my case giving it a rest for the day was the decision as it seemed unlikely I'd pluck a result out in these circumstances.



A night in a hut and some long stretching sessions, and I was ready to puff up the packraft and enjoy a day of luxury travel. I'd had an incident on a previous trip where the blade of my paddle broke off and sank, leaving me in a precarious position. Up that creek with half a paddle. Thankfully the new paddle didn't come from old mate Ali (AliExpress) and this trip I made the float in great time, arriving at the hut just after the sun was coming over the mountains behind.

Unpacking from the raft trip, assembling my rod and repacking for the day's fishing I ventured up the river slipping into stealth mode as if deer stalking. Two steps then look, another two and look. You can measure when you've shifted into stealth when you go a day without spooking a fish.

A nice sized fish was sighted feeding in the riffled pocket water of a fast bouldery run. The valley rose over 1,000m on each side of the river, and a steep spur jutting down beside the run was shading the water from any sun, but by getting up high on the bank the gin clear water revealed the fish as it swung to feed in the current.

Being autumn the dry flies have started to become less effective but I couldn't resist putting on a favourite dry and hanging the beaded nymph underneath. Late in the season it's good to think about not just what the fish are feeding on (depth, entomology, size, colour), but possibly also what flies other anglers may have fished with or potentially caught that fish with recently. Something to match the hatch, but possibly be a little different can create a game changer when you're targeting big tricky trout.





Getting a drift just in the seam between the fast and soft water evidenced that the fly choice was on the money and the trout was on the line. The dry wasn't of interest but signalled an eat for the nymph below. When the water is clear and shallower, fish will often rise up for an eat. This makes a heavy weighted nymph that scrapes the bottom less critical, allowing the more delicate touchdown (less chance of spooking the fish) that can be achieved with a less weighted fly. After several hurried crossings to keep the fish at close quarters, I landed an amazing 5.5lb fish. The mature jack had an incredible brown colouring over its shiny gold body, adorned with contrasting black spots. If it was to be a one fish day then I was happy! If it turned out to be a one fish trip that would be all good too!

The hut books had informed me of three guided trips recently in the area. How good that must be to fly in with a stash of fresh food and beer, fresh legs, and a fly box full of expertly crafted late season ties. One of the guides had noted the fishing to be tricky. That remark made the experience of catching this fish all that much more enjoyable.

Back in hiking reality I rummaged through my humble assortment of food before deciding to celebrate the day with a slice of bacon. That taste was amazing and a hut that now smelled of bacon became the gift that kept on giving. A perfect appetiser to my usual Backcountry Moroccan Couscous.



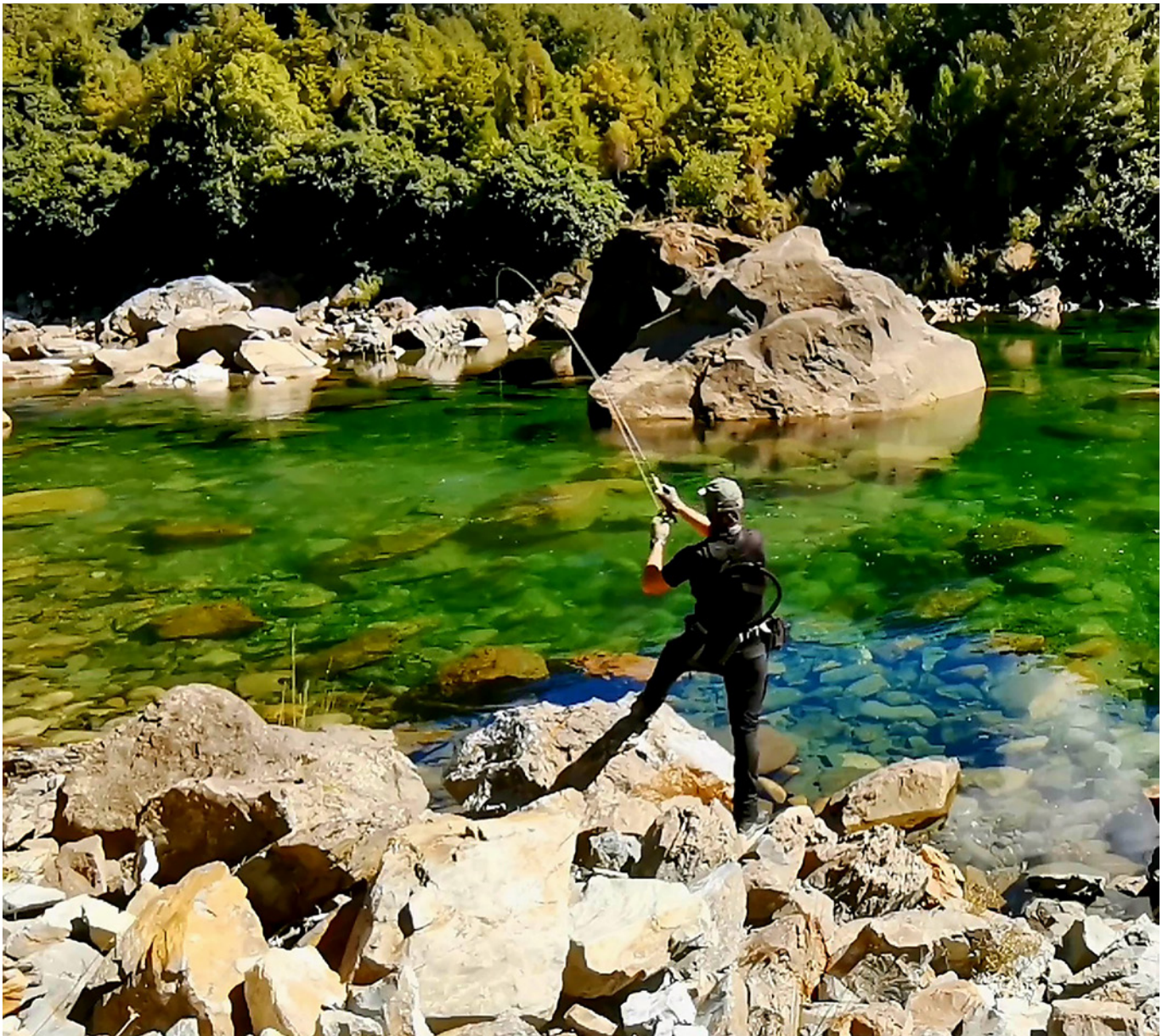
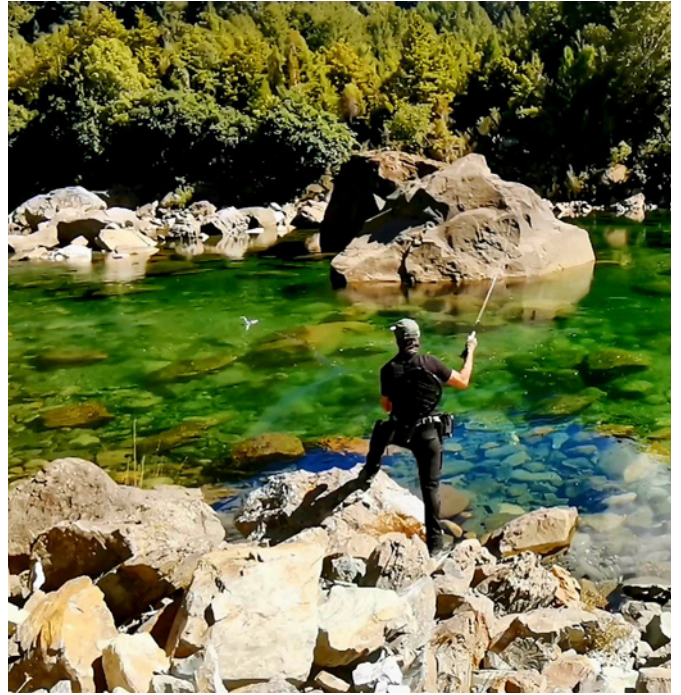
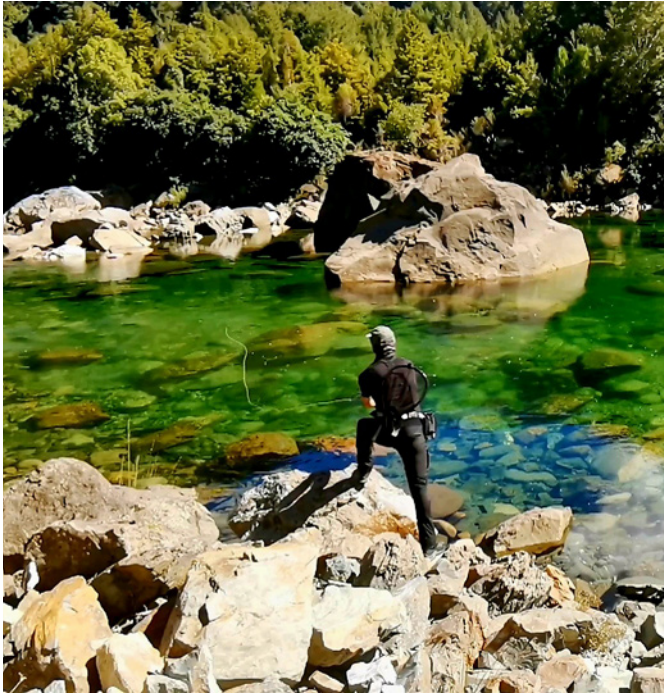
After two amazing days exploring and stalking I hiked out into another section of river I hadn't explored before. The water was very low and ultra clear except for a beautiful emerald tinge. Beech forest extended to the river's edge beneath a range of craggy bluffs that met bright blue sky adorned with a few picture perfect clouds. These clear conditions meant line and even tippet shadow were a major consideration, so any fish found would require a super careful planning and approach. Moving slowly upstream fish sightings were few and far between, but the lack of fish was compensated by the incredible surroundings of what has to be one of the most beautiful places I've fished.



I came across a boulder section running slow and clear. Two fish held in the foam line, feeding lazily. One of them rose. Ensuring my line shadow would cast away from the fish I presented a size 16 Adams about two feet ahead and slightly to the side of the fish, and the target swung to take it readily. It was one of those moments when you have to pinch yourself as it all seemed too good to be real. All the effort of the walk in, the planning and preparation beforehand, and the searching and stalking leading up to finding that fish. Often at that point even a look and a refusal is all you can be happy with. But I'd hooked that fish in this stunning place and it was all happening right now in this moment. That's the feeling that keeps us adventuring and creates the memories we cherish forever. As I write this article my mind drifts off to my bucket list of trips, searching for the next time I might have another experience like that.

Follow my adventures on YouTube





Challenging sight fishing in a tropical paradise . . .

Living The Dream

By Simon Hoole



If simulation theory is real, then what would be the ideal amount of stimulus needed to fuel someone to become an absolute fly fishing addict? If you were programming that Matrix, how would you test someone's resolve and keep them coming back for more? A touch of challenge and at times frustration give the determination to succeed; moments of intense success offset doubt; and insane moments that fill the memory bank for future positivity. There also needs to be a reward that imprints, leaving you chasing the dragon for that smashing take or drag-burning run. Meet flats fishing for bonefish! If life is but a dream, then it's a bloody good one on a tropical island sand flat waiting for the ghosts to arrive! It would be hard not to take that blue pill!

Arriving in Aitutaki was like a second homecoming; we were met at the grassroots airport by Butch and family and our main man Dean with his lovely partner. After warm greetings we were loaded up and riding on the back of a small truck to the Boatshed Bar and Grill, trying not to get a passing palm tree in the face. A few minutes later we were pulled up to barrel tables with a cold one wrapped in a koozie, catching up, talking plans, and watching Cleedo, Butch's son, slinking around the restaurant cheekily miming the variety of fly casts he had been working on outside of school since I last saw him.

After an evening of catching up and chatting with our lovely hosts, Moera and Honk, we were up gathering breakfast and supplies from the Koru café and subsequently on our way to the motu for our Robinson Crusoe style fly fishing adventure. It was time for dawn to dusk fishing, coconut marauding and a chance just to slow down and forget the rush of the city. Still in towny mindset, with that 'go, go, go' mentality, we were super keen to get rigged up and out on the water and the view from the balcony didn't help, as within a few minutes we saw shadows creeping from the blue over the edge of flat outside. It wasn't long before we were out prospecting those coral sanded, glistening flats for balcony viewed bonefish and doing our best to tempt them to eat. We garnered some attention and looks with great first shots, but apart from a few small, entertaining trevally, it was time to head back, have dinner and get ready for the morning.



Waking up well before first light to a hearty breakfast and the gurgling of the mocha pot, we were eager to get our lines wet. We were out on the flat just as the light was coming up to the horizon and we could just manage to see shadows moving. It wasn't too long before I had a bonefish on the line, joking to Will that it was a trevally as a hundred metres of backing left the reel. I had been able to see the slight view of a shadow move on the side of a drop off and had timed the cast beautifully; one strip and my shrimp had become breakfast. With the silver beauty tailed, photo'd and swimming back off to maraud the flats, we were on the board and set off to explore further.





We worked the flats with teamwork, flies at the ready and eyes scanning like we were searching for Wally or his American buddy Waldo; alert to call a sighting and depending on who was in the best position, ready to get the fly out at moment's notice. We were adjusting to island time and becoming honed to the environment once again. Over the course of the coming few days, we saw such a variety of bone fish behaviour. Was it because of their moods, the winds, tides, the moon phase, or a combination of all? One day a slight plop would send a fish beelining for the channel, another coming to investigate your fly, and at the best of times, charging it down like it was the last meal on earth. Whatever it was, we saw it all and more. I'll never forget watching Will stripping a Clouser to an oncoming bonefish; strip, strip, strip. I saw a change in the fish and yelled to Will, "Hit it!" He must have seen it too and

he gave it one heavy strip and the fish charged it like there was no tomorrow.

We were lucky enough to have a similar experience with a giant trevally on the flats the following day. My last trip to Aitutaki left me hungry to hook a flats GT and rekindle the thrill I experienced from hooking one on my 8wt, being absolutely torn to the edges of my spool, being towed up current in the lagoon after being ushered into a kayak and then the heartbreak of a bonefish hook ending up in the shape of a squirmy-wormy as it bent out; it haunted me. "If it had just decided to turn" plagued my mind, although, in reality a one way trip to the reef was more likely, but 'dreams are free.'

This time, I wanted one on the 12 weight and had two close calls on it, one on a popper that crashed for the fly at the shore like a breaking wave and one on a large siliclone baitfish that sped off to the side, but the hook just didn't manage to connect. Another was charging down the flats at me and I put the shot perfectly in front of it on my flats 8 weight. I had a strong hook and an absolute ton of backing on new wide arbor reel. However, it followed fast, looked to swipe the fly turning and galloping off back where it had come from.

Will, though, was connecting! He had been snapped off violently on one busting baitfish one morning after the decision to look back over a piece of water we had previously fished. A perfect cast, one big strip and snap!

That evening baitfish were being tussled with and Will managed to get his fly in the right place again. This time he held on and hold on he did, working the 12 weight to the backbone. When he finally hauled it into the shallows, we stood in awe as he got the hook out carefully and wrestled the beast up, hardly able to lift it at first after such a heavy fight with worn out arms.

The next day, Will got a highlight real chance on the flats as two GTs were swimming right at us. He got a great cast out, especially with the amount of adrenaline flowing through him seeing them zig-zagging towards us. Strip, strip, strip and boom, the back one swept to the side, its profile doubling as it hit the fly and turned back with it. This was one huge fish! Will's 9 weight bent double as his drag started peeling line off. I got the boat started and got to work, following it out toward the channel. Just fast enough to keep up and trying to keep Will's line on a good angle. I had practiced this in the Summer with the Kingfish and just had



to get my novice boat driving used to the tiller. Once out, I sat it in idle and we just let the fish pull us; and pull us it did, further and further out. Will held on and kept regaining line.

After about half an hour, Will was getting nearer the sink tip; for a second or two anyway. Then after forty minutes, the leader was in sight, and we started getting the colour and profile in the water. Seeing glimpses of it only a metre or so under the water, we were ecstatic. I was there with the net all ready when at forty three minutes and thirty two seconds into the fight, Will's line went slack. How, after all this time? Once the line came up the answer was glaringly obvious with only half a hook left, snapped clean. All we could do was laugh, get back on the flats and think once again. These are the memories they keep you coming back. Next time!

You know you're on island time when you find yourself wandering with nothing but a pair of shorts and a fly rod, the coral sands massaging your feet as you stalk the various flats for your quarry, tuning into the surroundings and just letting things happen – unplugged but connected.

After a scout on my own, I re-joined Will for a survey of the back flat, sun setting like fiery magma spilling onto the horizon. We walked our way down the beach, staring into the crystal water with the dying light giving us the visibility to see shapes and a touch of colour. Suddenly, right on the gutter edge, a decent school came into vision, right at us! Will flopped a fly into the pack and with a froth of an explosion, something ran and took him quickly into the backing. I grabbed the Gopro at his belt and filmed him and his racing drag. The fish turned and came back at us. When it got within metres of us, we saw the electric blue shine we had been looking for and best of all its pack of buddies were still with it, racing back to shore. While continuing to keep the camera on Will, I did what any partially sane fisherman would do and flopped a one-handed cast out. Zzzing! My reel sang. Will was in the process of wrestling his beautiful bluefin to shore under the lens, I was holding on, cackling with laughter and excitement, as my trevally zipped off to the sunset. Both of these electric looking fish were released into the dying light and another bespoke milestone had just been met and in such a comical manner – island time!

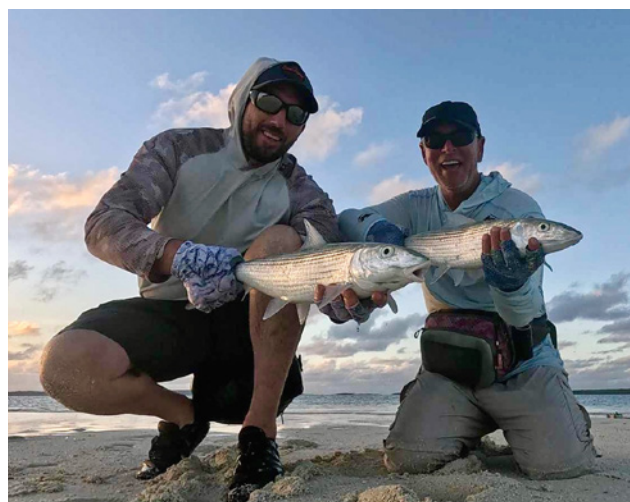




Aitutaki Barcode

The day after was dreamlike, with double hook ups and uncanny events. Will had told me the stories of encountering a real school of bonefish; one that looks like a large pack of cloud-like smudges on the bottom. I had seen a small one on the most crystal of flats from far afar on my last trip but that had kept an uncastable distance of at least a hundred metres and had played the bonefish dance, moving with my movements – disappointingly never getting nearer to me.

This time was something else! As I paddled Will down the flat, I spotted a large bone fish working its way up the gutter alongside us. The bonefish and I locked eyes as I called, “moving up from 9 o’clock!” Will with his veteran patience, held until he had a clear lock on the



fish. But this time was different as we gazed behind the fish to a school that just kept coming. Fish after fish! Will looked back at me with this stumped grin of him face exclaiming, “What do I do?” Cast the damn fly I thought to myself, but then the hesitancy kicked in, “to which one? Risk spooking the whole school, or let it pass and hope that it lingered up ahead for us to stealthily rejoin and try to pick some off from the edges? That moment and that look on Will’s face was priceless!

Will needed to regroup and I started eagerly stripping line off and getting ready to cast. I saw a small breakaway group from the school and targeted the biggest smudge I could follow. The line went tight and that, ‘HERE WE GO!’ split-



Back in the Boatshed



second moment flashed into my mind, and it was off. That first run had me doing the math: fly line, first 150m gone, well into the cheaper backing braid – damn, at least a 230m run. This fish had pep! It didn't stop there; every time it got close, it showed just how green it still was and shot off, bee-lining off the sandbar with a solid wake back to the deeper water on the flat. It was insane. After missing the tail twice, we opted for the net, and as Will scooped it up and its illustrious paddle hung out the size, he exclaimed, 'That's a 10lb plus bonefish mate. Wow!' Slipping out the fly, I marvelled at its girth as I lifted it out of the net to get a quick snap. A snap that never came as the chunky fish showed its power and snapped its body sideways to whoosh back to freedom at bonefish speed. I was left kneeling in the water with nothing left to do but take it all in and crack up and keep that one for the memory banks.

Cooling down in the heat required constant swims and to keep hydrated for fishing in that hot sun I needed coconut water. I set about picking off the low hanging coconuts with our SUP paddle and worked my way up to a slight straddle climb, to get at the good ones that always seemed just a touch out of reach. With all these freshly opened coconuts around, we set the gears to our next mission in place – coconut crab hunting. We had the burly ready and now it was time to venture into the bushes in a likely spot to set it and return deep in the night to wrestle with our quarry. Turning up, there were crabs! But these were of the more hermyty variety, wriggly all over the place pulling their shelled accommodations all over the remains of our coconut bait. We left, disappointed but glad we had made the effort to try. Back in the Boatshed, we were yarning with the owner Alan and brought up the coconut crab mission. He looked at us and walked away, returning a few minutes later with a plastic bag. To which, after looking in that plastic bag, we both agreed that perhaps it was better that we hadn't turned up in the forest to encounter a horde of these limb breaking clawed monsters, fumbling about in the dark after a couple of drinks, trying to get them in some scavenged bucket. We had fishing to do and needed line stripping fingers for a few more days!



Hanging with Butch



Last day, we were lucky enough to be catching up with Butch and going for a good old wade on the town flats. I like Butch's mentality, sight fished bones would be the only kind we would be fishing for and we'd have to "bring our A games."

My eyes had been on point all trip and I was enthusiastic to test them against Butch's bone vision. I started well enough, catching a bone slinking up a small side channel right towards me. I flicked a decent cast into its path but on its way over it seemed to notice us, turn and leave in a hurry.

Butch's eyes trumped ours again in the harder water, where the bones were coming out very translucent. He was always a step ahead on the these flats and I was impressed again to say the least. Although I was a second behind him, once locking onto these fish, I cast so perfectly accurately that I impressed myself! Far more than the bonefish, which took off in a hurry after the fly landed perfectly atop its head. Butch and I chuckled about it: "Don't stare at the fish!!!"

I decided to walk my own path and let Will have some catch up time. I needed to hone myself in without the training wheels to guide me. Finally, I saw a smudge in a small gutter I was sure moved but was seemingly stationary. I plopped my fly to the side just to double check and after one small strip, I realised I was right. Just as the line took off, so did the weight and I realised the worst had happened, busted. "Bad knot?" Butch called over. I wanted to believe it wasn't but deep down the burn that it possibly was ripped through. "Nope, cut through the leader," I replied, the slight twist in the line saying it could be otherwise.

I pulled out a beautifully tied, shiny Clouser, loop knotted it on my leader, pinched it in my fingers and was just about to start drawing line from the reel when Butch looked at me and exclaimed loudly, "stomp the shine off that!" I blinked and he elaborated: "Drop it and stomp it into that mud real good; squish it in there and let it soak up those juices." This really gelled with me. Why not take a nice fresh fly that may have solvent head cement, UV glue, production dyes or preservatives and "take off that shine"; let them soak up the natural odours of the environment you're fishing? A bit of Meola muck here or some Whanganui juice there; it makes sense!



Off to the airport with Cleedo



One area that's easy to look over when planning a flats fishing expedition is footwear and feet maintenance. I personally like to wear as little as possible on the flats and am often found wandering barefoot (not recommended around coral of course!).

Back on the main island, our lovely host Moera would chuckle at me wandering around like a mummy with bright green K2 tape trailing from my feet. Serious feet maintenance was needed to keep that beautiful coral sand from wearing even deeper holes in every contact point of my sandals. A layer of second skin and a wrap of K2 tape hit the mark and daily mummification kept things peachy. Remembering those specific wear points and taping from the start of the next trip would make life a damn sight more comfortable over the course of a long flats trip.

When our time was up, and we were saying our warm goodbyes, Moera asked me when I would be 'allowed back' and I replied I'd have to see about that, but I certainly hope it's not too long! We had our final 'Aitutaki Uber' to the airport, the warm wind rushing in our faces at thirty k' per hour, running parallel to the airstrip and watching the plane we were about to board come in with their next load of home comers, excited travellers, and maybe the odd fly fisher or two, as we ferried down the road with Dean and Cleedo in the cab.

Leaving Aitutaki left me with the feeling that I would be back. The chilling and the challenge – the highest of highs and crushing lows - where you just want to get another shot, another take and another run, but really at heart, are simply happy just being there and fly fishing. Back on island time, without deadlines and expectations. Just being out there in paradise with great company, a pair of shorts and a fly rod in hand, living the dream.



*A deer hair version of the Jock Scott salmon fly,
tied by the late John Morton . . .*



Fishing in Second Hand Bookshops

By Tony Orman

I can't resist second hand book shops and particularly angling for fishing books. I've landed some beauties too like many years ago coming across Roderick Haig-Brown's "A River Never Sleeps," in a second hand bookshop at Paraparaumu. As one critic put it "A River Never Sleeps", is one of the enduring classics of angling. Roderick L. Haig-Brown writes of fishing not just as a sport, but also as an art. He writes lovingly of moving water and the moods of the river and its fish.

If you haven't read "A River Never Sleeps" try to get a copy. It's available on-line. The book's very arguably Roderick Haig-Brown's best of a couple of dozen he wrote and that's high praise in itself, because all of his books are very good to superb. Month by month, he takes the reader from river to river –such as in January, searching for the steelhead, in May, fishing for bright, sea-run cutthroats and on chilly days of October, fishing for salmon.



That day in Paraparaumu I was absolutely chuffed to find "A River Never Sleeps". You see I once owned a copy and loaned it to a friend, a noted fishing author who long ago, passed away and shall remain nameless.

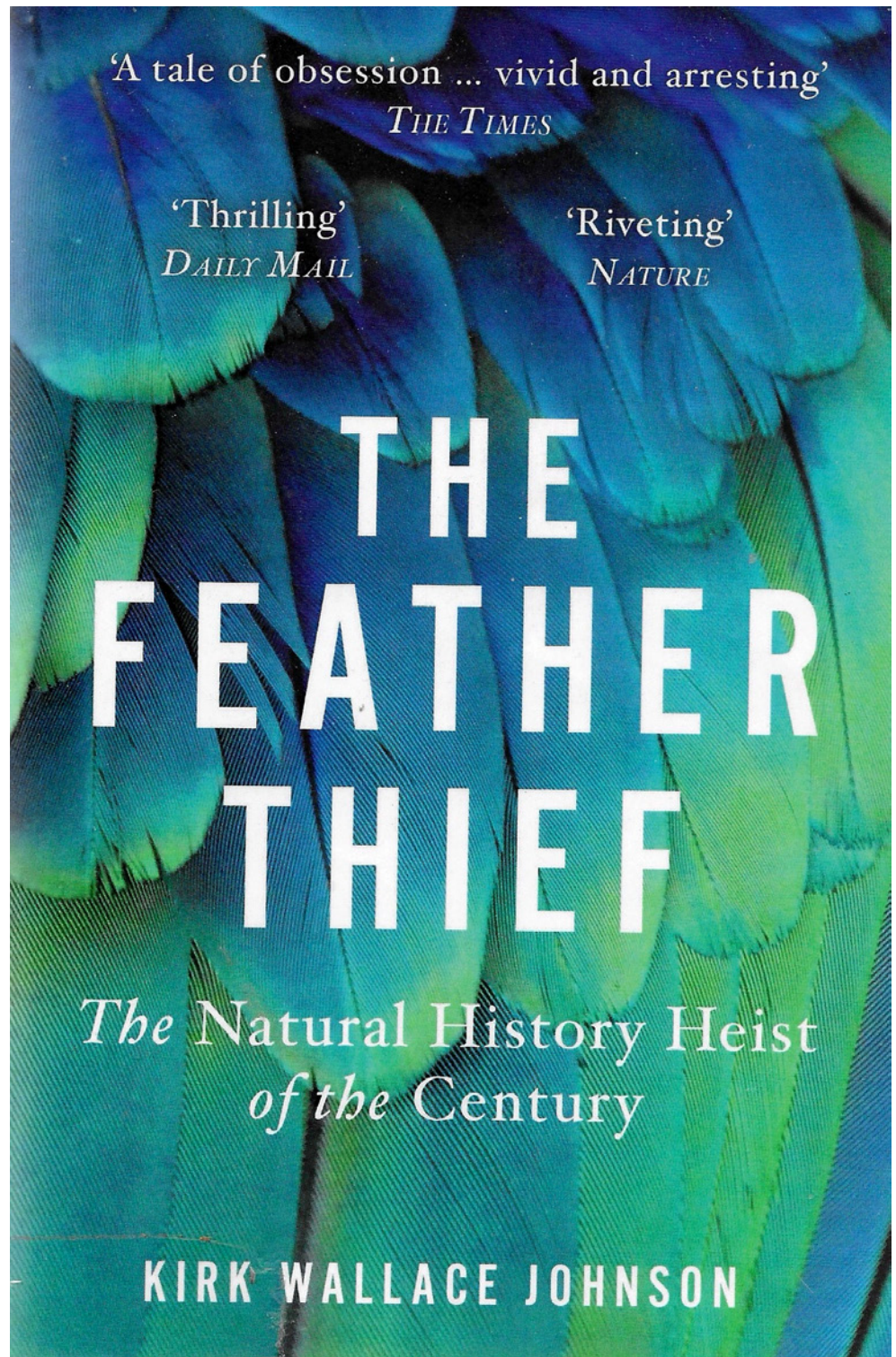
After a few months of the book not having been returned, I enquired as to whether he had finished it and if so could I have it back please. His response dumb-founded me. He was adamant my copy of "A River Never Sleeps" was his and always had been.

I guess the moral is, put your name inside the cover or just don't lend your favourite fishing books.

This year I came across a couple of most unusual fishing books. One is quite an incredible book, "The Feather Thief", about an obsession with tying trout and salmon flies. It's so wacky it might be a tall fishing story - except it's true.

It concerns a 20 year old talented flautist Edwin Rist who became obsessed with tying salmon flies yet he didn't fish. And there were and are others just like him, just absolutely obsessed with tying flies. One June evening in 2009, after performing a concert at London's Royal Academy of Music, Edwin Rist quietly made his way to the British Museum of Natural History, housing one of the largest ornithological collections in the world, the Tring. Edwin was about to carry out one of the most bizarre heists in history. Not money, not rare jewels, but feathers.

In the book, Edwin's obsession manifested itself in his excitement. "Edwin had never seen anything like these spectral bursts of iridescent turquoise, emerald, crimson and gold — salmon flies were huge tied on jet black hooks up to four inches long. Edwin could tie a trout fly in under a minute: a single salmon fly demanded ten hours of more behind the vice."



He broke into the Museum and snatched hundreds of bird skins, some 150 years old. It took the Museum months to realise it had been robbed. Again it took time before a detective on the case, chanced upon online fly-tying forums and linked the theft to a person selling some of the same feathers that came from stolen birds. On the trail, police traced the vendor to Ewin Rist who immediately confessed.

He was arrested, but released. In court, it was advanced as evidence that Edwin was a victim of Asperger's Disease. (Asperger's syndrome, also known as Asperger's, is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects how people behave, understand the world, and interact with others. Bing) Edwin was released and didn't serve any jail time.

It happened a couple of years later that Kirk Wallace Johnson was fishing a river in northern New Mexico when his fly-fishing guide mentioned the heist and its unsolved status. As he listened to the tale, questions began to pop up. His guide showed him a Victorian salmon fly.

'A fly like this calls for some of the rarest feathers in the world', said the guide, who admitted he was one of the Victorian fly tiers. "There's a little community of us on-line that tie 'em. Most of the guys have no idea how to fish. It's more an art form." The guide showed Kirk Johnson a beautifully tied Jock Scott. It was made from the feathers of a dozen different birds. "It was one of the most strangely beautiful things I've seen," confessed Kirk Wallace Johnson.

'The sheer weirdness of the story – I became obsessed,' says the author Kirk Wallace Johnson in his book, "The Feather Thief". "What would possess a person steal dead birds? Someone who didn't fish at all? The incredibly high prices paid for even one feather on-line?"

Johnson found Edwin Rist had been hooked into the obsessive art of Victorian fly-tying that led to his crime. Victorian fly-tying is characterised generally, as a pastime started in the mid-1800s, fuelled by the fervour for natural history and the exploration of exotic birds. Victorian salmon flies often use formulae that are up to 150 years old and using some of the rarest feathers in the world.

It's a fascinating read as the author goes on the trail of a feather thief. As one reviewer wrote "nothing compares to reading an adrenalin-fuelled heist story filled with weird twists, macabre motivations, and crazy courtroom antics. Usually, those stories are complete fabrications, fiction designed to titillate the reader's imagination. But in this case, truth really is stranger than fiction." "The Feather Thief" is available on-line.

Then a month ago, I dropped into The Book Barn, south of Christchurch and to be more exact, 10 kms south of the Rakaia River on SH1. There was a mind-boggling number of books. I didn't find much in the fishing section and had just about decided to leave when I came across the auto-biographical section. I had forgotten about fishing books and was scanning the titles when I came across one called "An Outdoor Journal" by Jimmy Carter.

Now to recall for younger readers, Jimmy Carter was US president 1977 – 1981. I always felt observing him on television that he was a honest man, sincere, quietly spoken yet positive. However in 1977, New Zealand Prime Minister at the time Rob Muldoon made a sneering reference to US President Jimmy Carter as just a peanut farmer from Georgia. Muldoon was noted for his rudeness and often cruel verbal abusive.

I found Jimmy Carter's "An Outdoor Journal" an intriguing read. Here was the president of a major power who loved fly fishing. I was aware Jimmy Carter had been to New Zealand and I heard from Tony Hayes of Tongariro Lodge about fishing with him. There's a chapter in "An Outdoor Journal" about his New Zealand visit. Some of the book is devoted to duck, turkey and quail shooting but most of it is about fishing for trout, bass, steelhead and saltwater bone fish plus fly fishing trips to Nepal and Europe.

Fishing aside, Jimmy Carter comes throughout as a man of intelligence and positive outlook, honest, intelligent, yet modest and with an urge to learn more about catching trout and other fish. There's a saying attributed to the 31st US president (1929-1933) Herbert Hoover that, "The good Lord does not deduct from the hours of a man, those spent in fishing." Well Jimmy's fishing years have stood him in good stead. He's now 99, due to attain 100 on October 1 this year.

US president Carter was a conservationist who loved and cared about the outdoors. For example, as president he confronted a long raging battle in Alaska between mining exploitation and the need to preserve wilderness and rivers.



"I poured over the detailed maps off the region, trying to decide how much of Alaska's natural beauty could be preserved without interfering too much with the state's economic development. Slowly we forged compromises that resulted in a landmark bill, which I signed into law on December 2, 1980."

Twenty-five free-flowing Alaskan streams were designated as Wild and Scenic rivers. The US's wilderness system was tripled.

"It was one of my most gratifying achievements in public life," wrote Jimmy Carter.

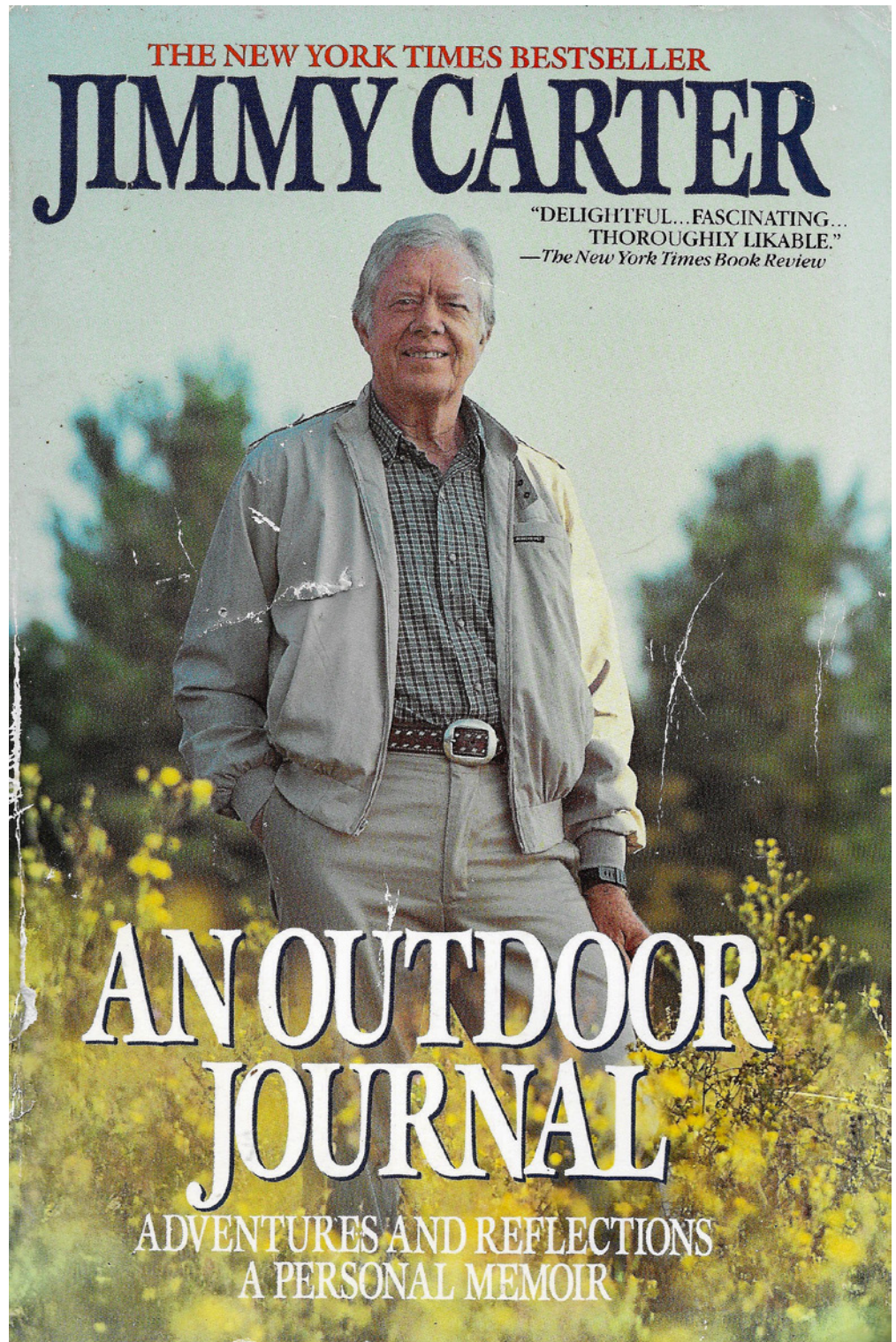
"I knew that for centuries to come, visitors to Alaska would be thrilled by some of the most beautiful scenery on earth, undisturbed by the ugly scars off an advancing industrial civilisation."

"This final victory was especially pleasing because it was also a triumph over a mighty phalanx of greedy, special interests who had made a last-minute effort to kill the bill."

The book reveals Jimmy Carter as a man who from his childhood in rural Georgia to his days in the White House and beyond was able to escape to and find renewal of spirit in fly fishing or other outdoor pursuit. His wife, the late Rosalyn, was also a keen fly fisher

"An Outdoor Journal" is a marvellous book and I got it from The Book Barn for just \$3. It too is available on-line I see.

And oh for more politicians like Jimmy Carter!



POLLUTION OF NEW ZEALAND'S RIVERS AND LAKES

By John Kent

I am a retired general practitioner and ardent fly fisher. I have held a NZ Trout Fishing Licence for 75 years, having started fishing for trout in the Avon River and its tributaries close to home in Christchurch with a homemade bamboo rod, a wooden Nottingham reel, a cutty hunk line and worms or bread as bait. In a good season I could catch 50 trout with a few weighing up to 4lbs and plenty of other kids like me enjoyed fishing. Now I cannot find any kids fishing the Avon and trout are hard to find except in the region of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens.

At age 14, a young neighbour introduced me to Robert Bragg, a shy Scot who worked as a professional fly tyer and rod builder close to where I lived. His workroom was a paradise for me with lots of memorabilia adorning the walls. I would sit opposite him at his desk for long periods listening to stories and watching him tie a gross of trout flies for Lake Taupo.

My mother encouraged my interest in fly fishing by bringing home from England in 1953, Eric Tavener's book, *Fly Tying for Trout*. Somehow I found a vice and slid it over a nail minus the head, and tied every fly in Tavener's book. I spent time in sports shops looking at patterns of NZ flies and when asked by a shop assistant, 'how can I help?' I replied, 'I'm just looking, thank you'.

Eventually at age 15, I'd saved enough money from raspberry and tomato picking to purchase a Sealy fly rod and a Hardy reel. I caught my first fish on a fly in the West Matukituki River while camping at Glendhu Bay with my family. A 3 lb rainbow rose and took my Rabbit streamer fly which failed to sink, as a dry fly. Apart from Robert Bragg, I am totally self taught. I spent one evening at the Canterbury Fly Fishing Club but received no help and thought the evening rise they kept talking about was something to do with teenage love!

Trout fishing is not an elitist sport and is cheaper than playing golf. Around 145,000 licences are sold each season and trout fishing is estimated to be worth more than \$250million to New Zealand's economy. At one time it was estimated that 1 in 20 incoming tourists wet a line when visiting. A fly fisher has the benefits of beautiful environments. In addition, there is always a challenge as so many variable conditions can prevail. Entomology and photography are additional delights.

After spending 4 years in Dunedin at Otago Medical School from 1965-60, I have lived in Christchurch, Nelson, Tauranga, Stratford, Auckland and the USA during my life. Between 1985 - 1989 I wrote 26 stories for *Rod and Rifle* magazine. As a result, Reed Publishing asked me to write trout fishing guide books for both the North and South Islands. I was at first reluctant to reveal my secret spots but I was told by the editor, 'well if you don't write them, somebody else will'.

When writing the North Island Guide, I received great help in both the King Country and Hawkes Bay from two expert local anglers. I had never fished in either of these regions. However, before helping me with local information, both took me fishing to ascertain whether





Plate 20. Canterbury lures.

- | | | | |
|--------|--|--------|--|
| 6 | Barred Rock, W. Winchester, Leeston | 29 | Harts Creek |
| 8, 10 | —Red | 15, 20 | Christie, R. Christie, Christchurch |
| 25 | —Silver | 1, 4 | Hope's Dark, Dave Hope, Selwyn Huts |
| 7, 9 | —Yellow | 11, 13 | Hope's Silvery, Dave Hope, Selwyn Huts |
| 26 | Brunton, R. L. Brunton, Christchurch | 24 | Swagger, Dave Hope, Selwyn Huts |
| 21, 22 | —No. 1 | 30 | Old Jack, Jack McNeil, Christchurch |
| 28 | —No. 2 | 16, 18 | Red Shadow, Bob Bragg, Christchurch |
| 23 | —Red | 19 | Silvery—Red, W. Wooster, Selwyn Huts |
| 27 | Brown and Paradise | 14 | Wooster's Silvery, W. Wooster, Selwyn Huts |
| 5 | Chamberlain Lure,
A. P. Chamberlain, Lakeside | | |

A fly plate from Robert Bragg's book of trout flies designed entirely for the Ellesmere fishery. Most of these patterns have long disappeared.



I could fish. I was very lucky in landing a large sea-run brown in the Tukituki River and another good fish from the Marokopa. They were both then extremely helpful and both became good friends. The South Island Guide was published one year later in 1990. The guides describe 600 rivers and 150 lakes, 95% of which I have fished. I have visited all the others I have not fished to ascertain trout stocks and a description of their environment. This obviously involved a lot of weekends away in my camper, mainly to look at lowland rivers I had driven past on my way to the high country.

In 1990, I met Patti Madsen, an American angler who had visited NZ a number of times to fish. Together, we travelled NZ widely and updated the guides about every three years. Patti had taught fly tying and casting in the USA and was a good photographer. At age 88, I am extremely fortunate to still be fishing. However, I am very sad to find severe deterioration in many of our waterways.

While in the USA, I was fortunate to fish streams and rivers in Montana, Washington State, Idaho and Alaska. I also gave presentations with slides on NZ Fly Fishing at International Fly Fishing Conclaves in Montana and Michigan. Anglers from all over the world attended these conclaves and I was fortunate to meet a number of the world's top anglers. At any one time I could sit in front of 40 fly tyers and discuss methods of tying and the patterns of their flies. I also attended a fly casting class and a fly tying class. Patti was involved in teaching both. The tutors were staggered at my method of fly tying as after watching Robert Bragg from the other side of his desk, I tied my flies backward - a mirror image. Then at the casting class, I was told I was overpowering my last cast and getting tailing loops! I had never heard of such an error. Being self taught has some drawbacks!

New Zealand once had the reputation of being the world's top fly fishing destination. A number of the top USA anglers told me they were no longer coming to NZ, however, as we do not look after our rivers, streams and lakes. They were now fishing Patagonia and Southern Chile.

Sir John Key before he retired from politics, along with Nick Smith, described the Canterbury Regional Council (ECan) as dysfunctional as two of the recently democratically elected councillors apparently had leanings toward the environment. Key and Smith replaced the council with Commissioners. All this allowed the development of intensive irrigated dairy farming on the alluvial Canterbury Plains with few environmental controls. This very soon destroyed the majority of Canterbury's lowland rivers and leading to the destruction of the once world renowned Ellesmere trout fishery. The spawning run of fish from Lake Ellesmere was once 40,000 fish. Now it is lucky to be 40 and only in the lower reaches of the Selwyn River. The Selwyn and Irwell rivers almost ran dry so very little water was available to feed Lake Ellesmere and flush it out.

Unbeknownst to me, my youngest grandson Jeremy aged 12 wrote to John Key before he retired from politics and asked, 'why is it that my grandfather when younger had great fishing within an hour's drive from Christchurch. Now we have to drive 2 hours to the mountains to fish?' I guess it was Key's secretary who replied, 'it is all due to global warming.' I saw red and replied, describing every stream and river in Canterbury that had been affected by poorly controlled irrigation or eutrophication. Key replied that he had referred my letter to Nick Smith, Minister for the Environment. I am still waiting for an answer. Coes Ford in my childhood was a great family picnic destination, especially for swimming in the river. Now there is a sign warning people not to swim because of pollution from a dairy farm or the riverbed is nearly dry.

Some years later at a meeting to discuss water led by David Parker, I found I was sitting next to ECan Commissioner David Caygill. I introduced myself and apologised for the 'shitty' letters I had sent to him. I then told him that I thought the commissioners were simply agents of the present National Government. Much to my surprise, he readily agreed.

I loved fishing the Irwell Stream as there were plenty of healthy trout and ideal conditions for sight fishing. George Boughton had lived all his life on the stream at Brookside, as had his father before him and at no time did it run dry. Now it is a shadow of a trout stream. I took Mel Krieger, world famous angler from the USA to the Irwell and he told me how lucky we were to have such a wonderful stream so close to Christchurch. One year later when I told him it had been destroyed he replied, 'what a heinous crime'.





Irwell River is now almost dry.



Over-extracted alluvial Tengawai River (Te Ngawai River), once an excellent fly fishing stream.





Weed growth from fertiliser run-off in the Bruce tributary.



I joined The Water Rights Trust, started by Murray Rogers in an effort to save Canterbury's rivers and streams. We didn't seem to make much progress. I have written to successive ministers of conservation and the environment, all to no avail. I have addressed a number of Rotary clubs, spoken to Federated Farmers, the Green Party, the Canterbury Fly Fishing club and twice to the ECan Councilors. I also had a number of articles and letters published in the Christchurch Press

Last year, I found an algal bloom in Lake Pearson. Another angler told me it started after a fertiliser truck was seen spreading fertiliser onto an adjacent Flock Hill paddock in a strong wind.

That same month, I found a similar bloom in Lake Marymere and an angler told me he had actually been hit by fertiliser from a yellow top dressing plane when fishing nearby Lake Hawdon. While checking Lake Grasmere an angler came out of the lake when the same plane almost removed the top of his fly rod, before spreading fertiliser on the old alluvial shingle slide separating Grasmere from Pearson. Eutrophication is caused by nutrients including nitrates and phosphates entering the water. This causes oxygen levels to drop accelerating weed growth and destroying insect life and fish of all descriptions, including native fish, either die or cannot thrive.

A few years ago, I fished a favourite tributary of the Bruce Stream. While having lunch, I watched 'humping and hollowing' being completed by big machinery. Then a truck spread fertiliser over the area before a sudden cloudburst washed most of the fertiliser down into the hollows and then into the main Bruce Stream just upstream from where it enters Lake Brunner. I sent photos to the West Coast Regional Council and asked what their strategy was for humping and hollowing. They replied, 'we have no strategy.' Some years later, I visited the same stream with a friend and found the tributary unfishable because of weed growth.



My angling mate, fed up with cows wading in the main Bruce stream.



The Waikakahi Stream is a spring creek which parallels the north bank of the Waitaki River and joins the main river just west of Glenavy. It is a spawning stream for the main Waitaki River and provides excellent spring creek sight fishing. Some years ago, a group of dairy farmers and Central South Island Fish and Game decided it needed restoration. The stream was fenced and stock kept away from the stream. A few seasons ago, my friend and I spent a great day fishing it and. It had markedly improved. Three years later, however, we again visited the stream and found to our horror that weed growth had begun to encroach from both banks onto the mainstream.

We could not find one fish. I rang Central South Island Fish and Game and their investigation found a herd of cows in the river further upstream. I doubt anything was done to the farmer except a slap on the hand.



Weed growth from eutrophication in Waikakahi Stream

The Waimea Stream in Southland is an excellent Mataura tributary for sight fishing. It drains the Waimea Plains and Hokonui Hills south of Lumsden and enters the Mataura River at Mandeville. My friend and I some years ago spent a day fishing so we firstly sought permission from a local dairy farmer. He was apologetic and upset because due to an 'accident' at his cowshed, the contents had drained apparently into the Waimea. He had rung Environment Southland the Regional Council and before long an employee came to visit. After he had seen what had happened, we asked whether the farmer would be prosecuted. However, because he had rung the Council and was remorseful, no action was taken. When we looked more closely at the stream, it was obvious that this type of 'accident' was certainly not the first time his cowshed effluent had entered the stream.

The Mataura River is supposedly protected by a Water Conservation Order. However, I have observed cows wading in the river just upstream from Ardlussa.

Before Vickers Creek at Whataroa in South Westland was destroyed by dairy farmers, it would have been rated as one of the top 3 spring creeks in New Zealand. Twenty years ago, an angling friend and I camped near the stream and observed a large herd of dairy cows wading across the creek 4 times daily on their way to being milked. Cows naturally 'empty out' when crossing a stream. We sent photos to the West Coast Regional Council and too many follow-up letters for them to ignore our complaint. After some time they investigated



the polluting farmer. He owned 6 dairy farms and they found 26 infractions of the law. He was fined \$120,000. Unfortunately, this was never well publicised.

Paddy and Anne Kennedy lived close by Vickers Creek and as so many anglers came there to fish, they built a cabin for anglers to rent. This year, a friend and I visited the Kennedy residence and found they had 'retired' to Hokitika. The renter asked what we wanted and when I told him we came to fish the creek, he said, 'just have a look' and see why it is now impossible. The creek is totally choked with weeds due to eutrophication. Note (in the photograph below) the electric wire across the stream to prevent stock moving either upstream or downstream with no bank restriction to prevent stock access.



So far, I've only written about fly fishing and stream destruction. However, there is a much more sinister problem especially in Canterbury that could escalate into a major public health crisis.

About 20 years ago, I visited Dr Hugh Thorpe, a very reputable hydrologist. My question was whether bacteria could pollute the aquifers. Aquifers supply most of Canterbury's magnificent artesian wells with water from the snow-fed Southern Alps sometimes taking fifty years to filter through the alluvial Canterbury Plains. Dr Thorpe told me that bacteria could possibly contaminate the superficial aquifers but they can't survive in the deep aquifers. However, he was far more concerned about soluble nitrates from farm fertilisers, cow urine, poorly managed septic tanks and pesticides entering the deep aquifers.

New Zealand already has a significant incidence of bowel cancer but consuming nitrates either in processed meats or in drinking water significantly increases the risk. Some experts criticise the limit set by the World Health Organisation and New Zealand Government level of 11.3mg/L.

The Michigan Department of Health has set a level of 10 mg/L. Others believe ingestion of any nitrates aggravates the risk. Recently, Greenpeace published the nitrate levels in many Canterbury wells and some are already well over the safe limit.

I cannot imagine any other planet we could move to so it surely behoves us to care much more about our amazing world. I do not think privatisation of waterways in NZ should ever be considered but we surely must change our attitude. Education is fine but greed is often the driving force. Spring creeks are especially vulnerable. Alluvial rivers periodically get a clean out from floods.

In conclusion, New Zealand does not seem to cherish their waterways. In the USA, most spring creeks are privatised. Two creeks near Livingston Montana, Armstrong and Depuys, cost between \$40 USD and \$120 USD dollars per day to fish, depending on the time of the year. Naturally, they are very well protected and cared for. In Texas, however, locals describe their rivers and streams as two thick to pour and two thin to plough. I hope we never reach that stage.



NEW PRODUCTS



ILFF PRESTIGE PRO FULL CAGE CNC REEL

CNC'd from high quality 6061-T6 proprietary aluminium alloy, this reel offers serious bang for your buck for both fresh and saltwater anglers alike.

The smaller 4/6 version is excellent choice for both Czech Nymphers and Trout Spey anglers, as being full cage means thin mono lines have no gap to slip out of and wrap.

The larger reels offer excellent saltwater options for a superb price. They have a super generous spool allowing for a serious amount of backing. The 7/9 makes a great bonefish or smaller pelagic reel, leaving the larger 2 options for bigger game. These reels have shone in testing on saltwater species like large bonefish, kingfish and trevally. Their sealed carbon drag systems have stood up to the test of saltwater environments with a soak and rinse in freshwater after use.

Prestige Pro reels can be purchased from ilovefishing for \$225- \$285 with a 10% credit earned for subsequent orders



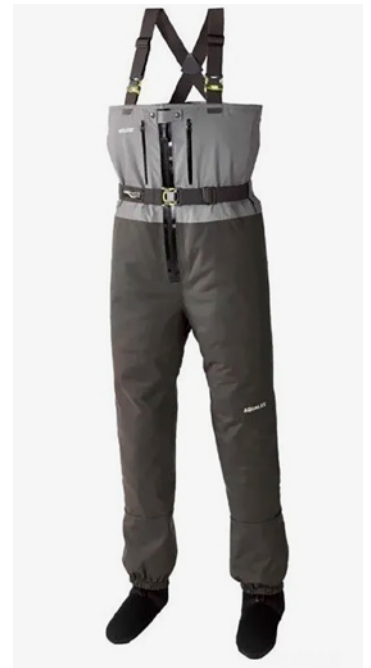
AQUAZ DRY ZIP PRO BREATHABLE WADERS

The best priced and featured front zipped wader available, the 3rd generation of the AQUAZ Zip Front Waders really hit the mark. They offer AQUAZ's quality waterproof freon zip manufactured in Germany and developed for scuba diving dry suits and ultra-breathable layers of Japanese AQUALEX Plus fabric.

They also have 1 layer of heavy-duty Oxford fabric wrap from hips down legs for added protection moving around the riverbank and 4mm Korean neoprene stocking feet with gravel guards.

Put all these together and you have one great pair of waders which give you the freedom to go when and where the need arises.

Pair these with the Trinity Pro Wading Jacket and you fit right in with the boulders on any river! *AQUAZ Dry Zip Pro Waders can be purchased from ilovefishing for a crazy price of \$567 with a 10% credit earned for subsequent orders*





AQUAZ TRINITY PRO WADING JACKET – THE ULTIMATE

This latest high quality breathable wading jacket from AQUAZ is developed with all new design, fit and features including a new water-tight tool pocket on the front left chest. It features a high fleece-lined collar and a variety of pockets with quality YKK® zippers and water repellent cuffs.

Pair this jacket up with the new Dry Zip Pro Zipped Waders and you'll keep dry and snug on those rainy Winter's days!

The AQUAZ Trinity Pro Wading Jacket can be purchased from [ilovefishing](http://ilovefishing.co.nz) for a crazy price of \$395 with a 10% credit earned for subsequent orders

NET – FISH FRIENDLY BAG

Funky Ideal sized net with fish friendly rubber coated nylon net.

Nets... so necessary, yet probably the most misplaced piece of fishing equipment. These aluminium framed nets in 5 eye-catching colours have a contoured foam handle and an internal stretch cord. These nets are rubber coated for the safety of fish and to stop your hooks from fouling in the net, and whilst stock lasts, even include a free set of scales to use with them.

These nets can be purchased from [ilovefishing](http://ilovefishing.co.nz) for a crazy price of \$44.99 with a 10% credit earned for subsequent orders



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Email: dschofield@magnumnz.co.nz**



THE NEXT EVOLUTION OF SIMMS G4Z HAS ARRIVED

Every detail considered, every forecast ignored. The latest pinnacle of angling evolution has arrived. Visit a Manic Tackle Project dealer near you to experience the most technologically advanced USA-made wader ever released.

G4Z's aren't made for the casual angler. They represent the peak of Simms' design expertise and have been the recipient of many coveted awards, making this wader the most durable, breathable wader available on the market today.

So what sets the new G4Z so high above the pack? The short answer is — a lot. One of the more visual improvements is the all-new spacer mesh suspender package. It's more of a harness style that provides anglers with a much more ergonomic fit and breathable support. Another tweak regarding the suspenders is the all-new quick-adjust, cam locking suspender hardware. This is a small detail that makes a world of difference, primarily because it gives anglers the ability to adjust their suspender on the fly. Simply flip the cam up and pull the suspender straps until the desired tension is achieved and flip the cam back down to lock in place. Wondering about the excess suspender strap material? Simms thought of that too. On the inside of the top hem of the upper of the wader, there's a laser cut slit that channels the excess material into the chest pockets of the wader.

For more on the fly adjustment capabilities, the new G4Z comes equipped with a new G4 specific stretch neoprene wading belt that stays in place with upgraded low profile belt loops.

The new G4Z features the classic pocket array of two zippered stretch woven chest pockets and an additional two zippered handwarmer pockets. The handwarmer pockets now feature a higher pile micro fleece to warm frozen fingers quicker. Finally, the product team at Simms also incorporated two fully submersible TruZip toothless, self healing zippers on the inside of the wader to stash smaller essentials.

Let's talk about those zippers. The main zipper is a YKK centre-front, fully submersible zipper. Previously, this zipper was sewn in, now it's bonded in. Why is this significant? When something is attached via stitches, it means more material, more tape, more bulk, and more rigidity. The new construction of the G4Z's most distinguishable feature is now bonded in. By doing so, Simms was able to reduce the construction from 16 layers of fabric down to only 4 (plus the zipper itself). This drastically decreased bulk and rigidity to provide a much better fitting upper that's way more comfortable. Less material, more performance.



NEW PRODUCT - LAMSON LIQUID MAX

Not only did Lamson rebrand this year, they also made three new reels. Scan your local river for glimpses of the new Remix S and Liquid S, but this blurb is about a new bully that will turn heads of anything you encounter in the salt or demanding fresh water environments. The new Lamson Liquid Max is no upgraded reel, it's brand new for Lamson. Brand new means that can take all the very best tech and jam it into a reel that you need to experience.

US made, the Liquid Max features the famed Lamson Cobalt Drag System. This is a stop-anything drag system with a proprietary Teflon alloy drag cone, Carbon PEEK thrust washers, custom self-lubricating seals and it comes with a fully certified IPX8 waterproof rating.

The whole shooting match is housed in a pressure cast and machine finished frame and spool, with an ultra large arbor, integrated reel foot and pocket spar frame and spool design that maximizes its strength-to-weight ratio. Top it off with a large, easy grip drag knob you have a reel that stop fish in their tracks. The new Liquid Max is available in sizes 6, 8, and 10 in the saltwater Tidal finish (top) and size 6 in the Cadet freshwater finish.



NEW C & F LIGHTWEIGHT FLY BOXES

C&F has long been synonymous with quality in the realm of fly fishing gear, particularly with their premium fly boxes. The introduction of their new lightweight Fly Cases marks a significant evolution in fly storage solutions.

Constructed from dense foam rather than traditional hard plastic, these cases offer a substantial reduction in weight, making them ideal for anglers seeking to lighten their load without compromising on functionality. The use of foam also provides added versatility, as it allows for secure storage of flies while minimizing bulk.

One notable feature of these cases is the inclusion of four strong magnets, ensuring that flies remain securely in place during transportation and use. This enhancement in design speaks to C&F's commitment to providing practical solutions for fly anglers.

The Lightweight System Fly Case caters to anglers who require adaptability in their fly storage. With the option to seamlessly switch between different fly types and sizes using the Universal Foam System, anglers can easily customize their setup to suit changing fishing conditions.

For those who prefer carrying a comprehensive selection of small nymphs the Lightweight Fly Case with Midge Flip offers ample storage capacity. Its fixed flip foam design maximizes storage space while maintaining a lightweight profile, making it a valuable addition to any angler's gear.

Available in small, medium, and large sizes, these lightweight fly cases accommodate the needs of anglers across various fishing disciplines. Whether navigating rivers or lakes, C&F's Lightweight Fly Cases provide a practical and efficient solution for organizing and transporting flies.



Visit your nearest Manic Tackle Project dealer to get all these products or find out more at www.manictackleproject.com.





As it began to warm up late morning, the grasshoppers took precedence once more, springing up out of the undergrowth like on mini trampolines . . .

HOPPER ADDICTION!

By Matt Hoole

I rounded a bend on the Thredbo River to find my mate Scott, hunched over, completely dialled in, casting to about a 1.5 pound brown trout. Passing him by, I rather brashly remarked, "What are you casting to that fish for Scotty?" "There's not enough meat on it to fill the holes between your teeth."

We had been away together on a weekend trip, fishing the spawning run in the Snowy Mountains of NSW, many years ago. Although Scott didn't reply much at the time, other than a half-murmured "Bloody Kiwis!", the conversation resurfaced as we were driving home that afternoon through the Kosciuszko National Park. Scott naturally wanted to know what my preferences were for fly fishing. I had no hesitation when admitting, I had become fixated on the annual brown trout spawning run. The idea of catching trophy browns had rapidly become an obsession, ever consuming my everyday thoughts.

At the time, we were both living in Sydney. However, little did I know, Scott had spent years living in Canberra, the gateway to the Snowy Mountains. He went on to say, "Matt, I'd rather be fishing the high country in Summer through Autumn, casting hoppers to 1-3 pounders all day long, than crammed up shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the country fishing the run." Although it didn't seem to faze my brain's fixation on going big and buttery, that comment lingered with me for years to come.

On reflection, I'd yet to fish a grasshopper pattern at that time. Truth be told, I hadn't done much surface fishing in Australia at all, content on dead-drifting nymphs or ripping streamers across the NSW lakes and dams. I'd really only pull out a dry fly on seeing a fish rise. Was hopper fishing perhaps akin to cicada fishing in NZ, where hungry trout would literally come from the depths of dark pool to smash your cicada? The seed was planted and I had to find out!





Post spawning colours on this stunning rainbow I lured to another hopper imitation.





*Andrew cracking the code
on the Thredbo River.*





The Thredbo River offers great fishing in a pristine environment in the Kosciuszko N.P.

It was a cool summer morning when myself and fishing buddy Andrew left Canberra, making the trip up to the Snowy Mountains to the Thredbo river once again. The weather had been warm, the insect life abundant and the fish extremely active of late, rising to take dries throughout the day. We chose the Ski Tube as an easy and accessible location and on arriving, rigged up quickly in anticipation.

After picking up a brown each, the fishing just dropped right off. When I say the trout became picky, that was an understatement! We were dropping flies exactly where they'd just risen, only to watch in anticipation as nothing eventuated, except for a slight swirl slowly dissolving away where our flies had just been. This continued for several hours. We'd gone through our fly boxes trying to match the hatches of spinners that could be seen spiralling frantically above us, and then returning back to the snow caddis that had been so fruitful this summer, and still no answer!

Just as the frustration began to mount, Andrew saw a grasshopper fall from a tree onto the water's surface on the far side of the bank! Gulp! It disappeared in seconds.

Without hesitating, he tied on a green hopper imitation, wound out a long cast across river, watching attentively as the hopper splatted down on the water. After gently drifting for a few seconds, SPLASH! It disappeared underwater.

A few moments later and we had the trout in the net, gazing down at this oversized fly hooked in the corner of its lip. I could see why the trout were so enamoured with them, it looked like a meal fit for a king!

Andrew kindly handed me over a size 12 hopper, the exact imitation he'd just caught the fish on, and with that, we went on to catch more fish than I can remember that afternoon, all on hoppers!

I was hooked with throwing out these mini Jandal-style flies and watching fish come out of nowhere to smoke them! The bigger the pattern, the harder the fish would hit them. The size of the fish was irrelevant, big or small, the hoppers made it all!





The Namadgi National Park's mountainous outcrops tower over you making you feel small and alone.

A month later, we arrived into the headwaters of a small stream in the Namadgi National Park, south of Canberra. As myself and Andrew got kitted up we met up with another guy, James. I explained how this river had become James's new stomping ground. A small stream that zigzagged through open farmland and rolling hillsides, framed by its mountainous outcrops, rather symbolic of Namadgi's harsh landscapes.

James had been fishing the stream thoroughly over the last year, knowing exactly where its fish were holding. For a tight piece of water, where in places you could almost jump across, it held some great sized fish. We caught up with him just up river and within no time, we were bashing our way through snake infested chest high reeds and pastures down to the water's edge. "You guys aren't worried about snakes", I asked. "Not really Matt. They'll move off in a hurry when they hear you coming," James said. "Just don't stand on one," Andrew replied. "Jeez, thanks for the reassurance, guys!" I exclaimed.

James led the way, keen to show us the likely holding spots. When I say led the way, he bounded off in front like a greyhound cut loose from its pack. I had to put my skates on to keep up, while recognising Andrew, the more senior citizen of the group, had no chance.

James wasn't lying. Fish turned up each time to take our offerings, in exactly the lies he'd predicted.

"Try here Matt", he said, as we walked up to an inviting looking riffle. A flash of brown passed below my fly, before the fish rose to take it. All of a sudden it was mayhem! James jumped into the water off a two metre bank, like an action hero, net in hand. After stripping line in frantically, I also had to jump in to be more in touch with the fish.

A beautiful brown, buried its head deep within the undercut of the bank, while I tried desperately to wrestle it out. The 4 weight bent sideways under its weight.

As it began to warm up late morning, the grasshoppers took precedence once more, springing up out of the undergrowth like on mini trampolines. Their abundance was unfathomable and there was no hesitation when exchanging our Stimulators for Hoppers.

Within minutes, Andrew was getting take after take, and James had just hooked into a beautiful two pound Namadgi rainbow. It looked colossal in twig water charging around the pool like an alpha male, before he got the upper hand and buried it in the net. Absolutely stoked, he exclaimed there's much bigger fish holding in these waters guys!





James surveying some likely holding water.





James coming up trumps with his 2lb Namadgi rainbow.





Falling victim to an oversized hopper on the Numerella River.

What's different about fishing the larger terrestrials is the way you can slap them down on the surface and it almost excites the fish, crying out "meal time boys!!!"

Typically dry fly fishing is all about finesse, with presentation often being the difference between success or spooking fish. However, a hopper is like slapping down steak and chips on the table, so naturally you can see why their greedy little eyes would light up upon the sight and sound of one spanking down on the water's surface.

Given there are multiple species of grasshoppers in Australia, with some species more common in the alps, the hoppers can change colour for various reasons. Life cycle, body temperature, hormonal reasons and predatory responses are all given reasons. Their colours can range from black, brown, turquoise blue, green and even yellow, hence why there's various colour imitations to match with them.

I vividly remember an occasion when our family did a day trip to the Numerella River, east of Cooma in the Monaro region of NSW. We paid a fee to spend the day on private property, with access down to the river. As we were pulling the awning out for shade a trout fed actively, smacking something aggressively off the surface. Without contemplating, I pulled on my waders, pieced together my rod while tying on a size 10 lime green hopper. I then stalked my way down to the river's edge, like a cat bearing down on a mouse. I only needed three casts to find one, as he pounced on the hopper, more like an attack, than a meal. Water sprayed up in the air as I raised the rod, unfortunately I failed to hook him. My wife, Maïke, who was behind me witnessing the commotion, let out a cry of astonishment. "They just love the hoppers, don't they!"

I got one beautifully marked brown trout that afternoon that made my day. It took the hopper in similar fashion, with a big gulping sound as it devoured from underneath.

Summer through Autumn offers great hopper fishing in the NSW and ACT regions of Australia. Seeing trout chase a hopper like their life depends on it, or rise from the depths to engulf one, is simply exhilarating!

It keeps taking me back to those words expressed so sincerely by Scott, over a decade ago, how I too could cast hoppers to 1-3 pounders all day long. Having now experienced the rush, I can only agree. It's not only an effective form of fishing, it's the hopper addiction!

Matt represents I Love Fly Fishing in Australia. Contact: matthoole34@gmail.com



Trout or Salmon in Pastry

Wild to the Table with Tony Smith

There are so many variations possible in this type of recipe. A little preparation is involved but it can be all be done in advance and the result is a classic, eye-catching table dish. The rice and mushrooms, as well as adding flavour and texture, provide layers that allow the pastry to cook without the fish becoming overcooked.

INGREDIENTS

350-400 g skinned boneless trout or salmon fillets

3 sheets puff pastry

1 egg yolk mixed with a tablespoon of milk

1 smallish red onion, finely diced

4 garlic cloves, crushed and chopped

½ cup basmati or jasmine rice (rinsed well)

4 leaves Silverbeet (Swiss Chard), green part only, chopped, or a small bunch of Spinach

Around 30ml olive oil

1 cup water

1 teaspoon stock powder

200g button mushrooms (200g), finely chopped

General Seasoning

THE RICE

Put a little oil into a saucepan. Fry half of the diced onion and garlic for a minute, add rice, water and stock. Bring to the boil, cover, turn down the heat and cook for 15 minutes. Add silverbeet or spinach and cook another 5 minutes. The rice should have absorbed the liquid. Season to taste and keep aside to cool.

THE MUSHROOMS

Put the remaining onion and garlic into a small pan, add a little oil, then the mushrooms. Fry until the liquids have evaporated. Season and leave to cool.



THE PASTRY

Cut one pastry sheet in half and extend the length of the second sheet, pressing each half sheet onto the each end of the second full sheet, overlapping a couple of centimetres.

ASSEMBLY

Lay a sheet of pastry onto a lightly floured board. Spoon an even line of rice along the middle of the pastry, leaving a few centimetres clear on each end.

Season the fillets generously, lay them onto the rice base in a way to have an even thickness. (With two small fillets just top and tail them.) Place the mushrooms on top of the fillets.

Brush the edges of the pastry base with the egg yolk mix, then place the remaining third sheet on top. Press the pastry into shape then trim and crimp the edges. Decorate however you like with remaining pastry off cuts. Brush with the egg yolk wash, keep the remaining to brush again prior to baking. Lift onto an oiled baking tray and keep refrigerated until required.





COOKING

Preset oven on fan bake to 210° c. Brush generously with egg yolk wash, place in oven, bake for 10 minutes then turn down to 180° c. Bake for a total of around 25 minutes. It should be well coloured. Take out, place on a wooden board and cut into serving pieces with a serrated knife.

Serve with a simple side dish such as a steamed green or salad, and a chutney such as beetroot or green tomato.

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



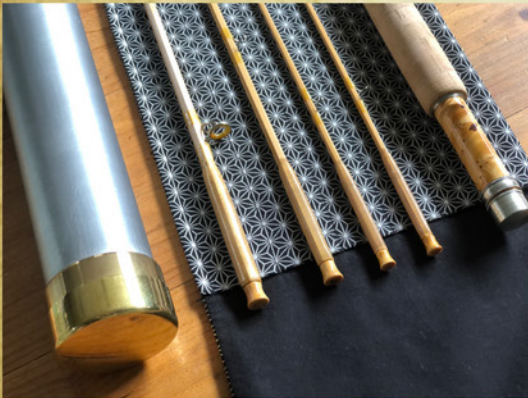


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