

Issue 197

TROUT FISHER

Fly focused but totally transferable

Winter 2026



Bruno Kemball: An Englishman Downunder
Fully Ready ~ Planked Trout
The MICRO Leader System
Confessions of an Addicted Salmon Angler
Chasing Trout in the great Aussie outdoors

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Email: peter@nztroutfisher.co.nz

Telephone: +6473628914; Mobile and What'sApp: +64274844494; answer services on both phones.

Cover: 3.5kg/62cm 2024 Autumn Release Rainbow.. (PWS)



2 Bruno Kemball: an Englishman downunder

By John Austin

As an angling historian, whose main interest is game fishing in the six old Northern Counties of England, a couple of years ago I was intrigued to see a packet of North Country spider or hackle flies for sale that had been retailed by 'The Red Spinner,' Hatepe, which definitely isn't in the North of England!

10 New Products

From Manic Tackle Project

14 Fully Ready

Talking Plenty with Peter Storey

It's been another tough three months here on the lake. The quality of the fish caught has been exceptionally high throughout, but getting onto them has proven as unpredictable as ever.



20 Planked Trout

Wild to the Table with Tony Smith

The indigenous people from these major river areas . . . have cooked their 'staked' salmonoids over fire for centuries and today's covered barbecued plank cooking is certainly a convenient version of this wonderful tradition.





24 The MICRO Leader System

By Steve Griffith

The technique itself involves casting the rig upstream and across, and maintaining just enough positive tension on the line to ensure the nymphs drift back naturally.

32 Books

Peter Storey reviews John Austin's GAME FISHING IN THE NORTH COUNTRY

33 Letters

From John Kent

34 More Problem Solving

Parts 14 & 15 of Confessions of an Addicted Salmon Angler, by Larry Burke

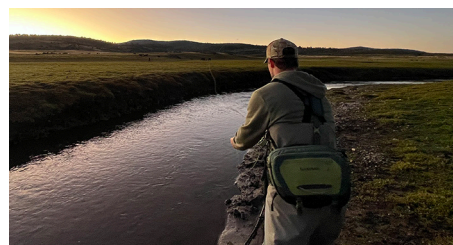
What at one time seemed strange to me about salmon fishing was the unpredictability of every new season. A good season does not mean the next one or the one after is going to be as good.



40 Chasing Trout in the great Aussie outdoors

By Matt Hoole

Fly fishing takes you into some extraordinary places, and in Aussie, some certainly test the pronunciation. In ACT and New South Wales, the Kosciuszko, Namadgi National Parks, Jugungal Wilderness and the Goodradigbee and Goobarragandra rivers give your mouth and brain a workout.



Thanks to Ross and Pippa at TRM, for their help with John Austin's article . . .



TONGARIRO
RIVER MOTEL



Reflections on Nymphing Part 2, Larger Streams

The MICRO Leader System

By Steve Griffith



Time certainly flies when I consider that it is 18 months since I wrote part one of this article, "Reflections on Nymphing Small Streams", in the Summer 2024 issue. There, I explained how and when I fish the modular leader with nymphs, dry flies, and streamers.

The modular leader is great for fishing short casts where the effect of drag is not so much of an issue, and rig adaptability is the objective. But when fishing nymphs at distance, where the effects of drag caused by both wind and line sag can become a significant issue, this is where the micro leader comes in. Like the modular leader, my introduction to using micro leaders has taken my previously average success level in nymph fishing to another level, when used under the right conditions.

Originally created for competition fishing, microleaders consist of a very thin section of monofilament (typically 6 - 8lb rated breaking strain) connected to a fly line, or some form of minimal diameter euro running line. There is plenty of resource online describing how best to configure and use microleaders. Forums such as Troutbitten, Tactical Flyfisher have excellent online videos which cover this.

The microleader is fished as a running line through the rod, and directly connected to the tippet via a short section of sighter material. This sighter material can be multicoloured, with a combination of shades that vary depending on lighting conditions, aiming to get the required background contrast to help with visible bite detection at all times. Usually, the running line is also some form of highly visible monofilament. I use a product called Pierre Sempre, which comes in a range of sizes and colours. This product was previously only available overseas, but can now be purchased locally at 'I Love Flyfishing'. I like this product, as it is relatively strong and limp, and this helps for bite detection, especially when fishing with a reasonable length of line out the rod tip (e.g. one rod length or more).

Just bear in mind here, that in the Taupo region, total leader and tippet length is restricted to less than 6 metres. So when fishing larger rivers, it isn't uncommon to fish with a section of flyline or euro running line between the rod guides.

Fishing with micro leaders is typically only used with nymphs and long, ultra sensitive euro nymphing rods between 10 and 11 feet (or more!) long. This is because during the cast, the angler is casting the weight of the flies themselves, rather than the weight of the fly line, or a heavier modular leader as described in Part 1. Do not expect this rig to be the best choice for fishing dry flies or streamers. The latter could be used if required, but typically would require some weight to allow the rod to load during the cast.

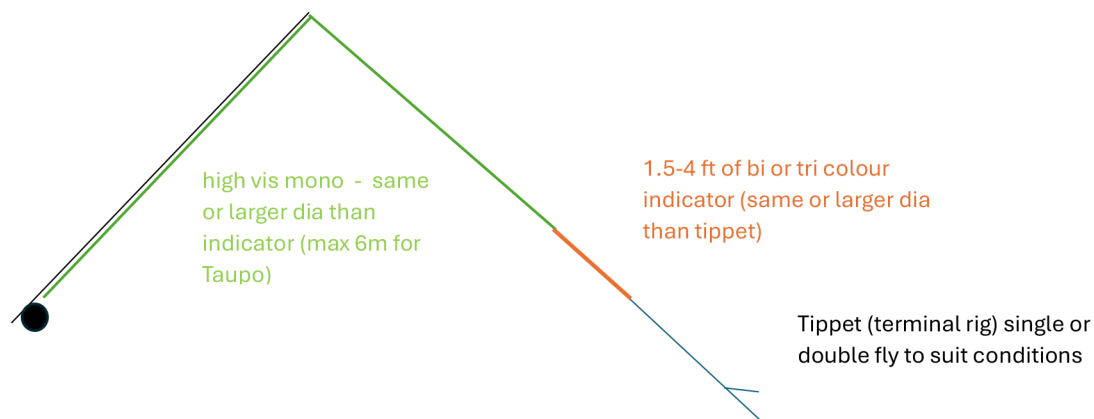
Depending on the weight of the flies being used, and also the size of fish expected to be encountered, these rods vary between 2 and 4 weight, although the tip action is generally the most important aspect. Butt sections on euro rods are generally upsized to put pressure on fish, which is required to overcome the leverage working against the angler due to the long rod length. I typically fish a 3 weight euro rod that is 10'10" long, and it has no problems dealing with winter run fish typically encountered in the central North Island.

The Pierre Sempre Jaune (yellow) I typically use is 0.203mm diameter and 3.520kg/7.7lb breaking strain, which while it might seem light, provides several things for me:

- a breaking strain and diameter that is typically heavier than my standard tippet size
- enough thickness to provide good visible bite detection when reaching out.
- light enough to not drag flies back towards me when reaching out, especially when using nymphs with bead sizes 3mm or larger

When fishing in the smaller diameters, in my experience, it becomes more of a challenge to ensure the breaking strain of the rig becomes increasingly higher towards the connection with the fly line or euro running line. This is because we are trying to take advantage of thin and limp micro running lines, whilst also stepping down in breaking strain to use tippet that is sufficiently strong enough to handle the relatively large trout often encountered in New Zealand. I suggest you experiment with what works best for you.





Above: an illustration of a typical microleader setup.

Below: the materials I have been using successfully.



Using this set up, to some extent, you can manage the position of breakages by experimenting with stronger or weaker knots at specific junctions. Having said that, we are dealing with fine margins/differences of breaking strains between the three sections, and each material's breaking strain can be thrown out completely by a small nick or abrasion. So check your running lines regularly for damage, and replace if necessary. Make sure you also re-tie knots regularly, especially after they get stressed through snags or landing several good sized fish.

