

“Ripples”

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

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Kakahi Queen
tied by
Miroslaw Senderski



www.southlandflyfishingclub.org.nz



*Southland Fly
Fishing Club*

Editors Choice Tippets

Environment Court Oreti Valley Decision Saves Iconic Backcountry

Southland Fish & Game has hailed as a “great outcome” for all of Southland an Environment Court ruling in its favour over the Oreti River valley. Fish and Game had opposed the Around the Mountains Cycle Trail’s planned route through the valley, a world renowned trout fishing location.

Fish & Game appealed to the Environment Court against an independent commissioner's decision to grant consents to the Southland District Council (SDC) for stage two of the trail. The Court decision has now allowed the appeal, effectively halting the consents that had been granted. Chairman of the Southland Fish and Game Council Graeme Watson says it's an excellent outcome for not only anglers, but all of Southland “because it saves one of the most iconic backcountry areas.”



The judgement upholds our case, stating that unmodified rivers are “limited, finite and highly valuable recreational assets,” he says. Mr Watson says Fish & Game always supported the alternative route proposed and attempted to work constructively with the District Council, but to no avail. “We even offered to contribute funding towards the alternative Mararoa option, rather than go to court, but unfortunately this was not accepted.

“The Environment Court ruling in no way prevents the SDC completing the trail as there may be more than one viable route down the Mararoa Valley, the Environment Court judgement says.” This had been Fish & Game’s suggestion right from the start with evidence gathered indicating that that it would be as scenic, as well as cheaper to build and maintain. “Not only that, it would be safer and provide better links to Te Anau while at the same time not compromising the overall appeal of the trail.” Mr Watson says that Fish & Game had never been anti the trail, and promoted the alternative in the full belief that its adoption would be in the best interests of the SDC and Southland’s ratepayers.

The Council-commissioned Deloitte's review identified what was described as a “lack of expertise in the actual scoping, design and construction of a cycle trail.” It was extremely unfortunate the District Council did not follow the advice it was given, Mr Watson says. “Had they received competent advice I believe the Council was unlikely to have dogmatically pursued the Oreti option, which has now been found to be entirely inappropriate.” “The Council now has an opportunity to assess how to pursue the Mararoa options in light of the judgement, which concluded that “little weight can be given to the predictions of economic benefits.” Mr Watson says that Fish & Game welcomes “any opportunity” to work with the District Council on further assessment of a Mararoa Valley route. Environment Court Judge J E Borthwick’s full decision on the Oreti River valley is available at the F&G website for download by concerned anglers.

Cover Photo: Miroslaw Senderski



Excellent flies and photograph by Simon Caddy

Fast Drying Z Series Boots

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"People get the Politicians, and fishing tackle they deserve."

John Gierach

Fishing Report by Redtag



After a reasonable start to the season weather-wise last month this month has been hard going to say the least. With the river virtually un-fishable locally it has only been the headwaters and some small streams that have been fishable over the past few weeks. Heavy rains and gale force winds from all directions have compounded the problem of trying to find the right spot at the right time.

However as the photos to the left show if you put in the research by getting out there and discovering streams that are quick to recover from a downpour you can (excuse the contemporary pun) turn up trumps. Spring fed creeks are the go and there are a few in Southland that you can identify if you put in the time to study topographical maps and keep yourself informed of the river level data on the Environment Southland website.



All fish in the photos were caught in a small stream on CDC emergers during a hatch of mayfly which have been abundant so far this season.



There is much talk of 'tourist' anglers impinging on NZ anglers access in the angling press especially in the F&G magazine. It would seem they are promoting that overseas anglers will have to be accompanied by a NZ guide. This is a ludicrous suggestion. I have fished all over the world and have never been 'guided' by anyone. It would appear that the guides and the F&G magazine are in cahoots in promoting their own interests.

The whole point of fishing as I see it and it has been written by much more literary scribes than myself is to experience the fishery by yourself which I have always done.

Redtag

Seven Ideas For Fishing The Spinner Fall by Kjell Rakkenes



Real life spent spinners are not as tidy and spent as we all tie them. Some are of course, but most of them are untidy tangled and half-drowned versions of the perfect cross we all use when fishing a spinner fall. Why not try an alternative approach?

Don't you just love those summer evenings when it all comes together after good may fly hatch, and the evening show opens with a magnificent spinner fall?

As I write this, in the midst of the bitter Norwegian winter, these moments are just distant memories. But the reminiscent of fading evening light, may flies falling like snowflakes and rising trout is what makes the clock tick, the day and weeks pass. Actually, the very thought of these rare fly fishing days makes the winter pass.

I remember a couple of years ago. We had been out in the river all day. The summer had been forgiving and had given a frozen northern angler some pretty good days out. The little birds had been hatching evenly and well distributed throughout the season. Sparse but enough to entice trout to the surface on a regular basis. I was also blessed with a few memorable moments earning more than one page in the fly fishing diary. Up here, close to the polar circle we're not spoiled with long hatch cycles. The season is also short, the water cold, the weather and hatches unpredictable.

Every opportunity is a gift. But, we're blessed with pristine waters world class nature and a wilderness you'll find very few other places in the world. And the light. The Scandinavian mid-summer light with virtually no darkness makes the season twice as long. Or, so it feels.

That summer a few years ago, there were spinner falls every other night – mirroring the hatches a few days before. I had been fishing an Ephemera hatch (Aurivilli). It was mid July, and as the evening approached I felt content. Satisfied with what the river had given me and how the little bugs triggered fish to the surface. The trout had been kind, giving me more opportunities than I was able to take. But still, I landed quite a few golden speckled beauties that day.

“My God I'm glad these moments come rarely”, I was thinking to myself as I waded ashore and out of the ice cold water. Gratitude to days like these increase exponentially with the absence of them.



Sleeping bag next

And as I sat there by the river bank, sipping the traditional Aquavit (a damn harsh Norwegian liquor), the rising gradually (but still) suddenly stopped. For an hour, no activity on the river. A quiet calm came over me as I sat there and let the sight and my thoughts wander away to a place where tranquillity and peace govern. The place you'll only reach in the wild, at your river with your favourite rod at your side.

"That's it for today. Now it's back to the tent, the sleeping bag and a few more of those Aquavits. Then there's tomorrow. There's always a tomorrow", I softly said to myself as I started packing.

But just as I got up, looked up to consider tomorrow's weather forecast, I saw them coming dancing towards the rivers. Small mayfly bombers loaded with little eggs, ready to dive into the water to fulfil their final mission. And, to die.

Christ almighty. They came in numbers. There were Aurivillius (Aroni), Ignitas, Baetis and even a few Danicas. What already had been an unbelievable day out, was obviously going to end in a bang. A crescendo and a firework. A Grand Finale!

Undo the packing

As the packing routine went in reverse, I felt a shiver of excitement when I started preparing my rod for a night out in the river. But then I stopped setting up the rod. I felt content. Didn't have to wade out in the ice cold water again. I have had enough, I can just use this moment at this godforsaken heavenly spot just to observe what happens. Observe what a spinner fall look like, when not participating in it. I could use the opportunity to learn more about the behaviour of both fish and bug. Usually at moments like this, I'd be standing out in a river waving my stick. Sometimes with a calm, but just as often stressed about the fact that opportunities are so plentiful that it's difficult to choose which fish to go for.

I decided just to sightsee the squadrons of may fly bombers as they left their eggs on the river bed, and then slowly die on the smooth surface of my river. Too rarely had I taken the time to do this. Tonight was the night for learning and observing the spinner fall and how trout responded to the floating crucified bugs on their predestined final journey.

Thus my diary had a new chapter written that night. Thoughts on what I saw, coupled with nearly 40 years of practical fishing and experience, finally became structured and documented. First of all for myself and my family. But here they are, somewhat structured and hopefully well presented, my thoughts on fishing a spinner fall.

Seven key learnings

1 – They are difficult to see

If you actually observe, it's easy to see the difference between a dun rise and a fish rising to take a flat and dead spinner. The spinner is taken with grace, and not the aggressive attack as you sometimes observe during a hatch when the trout is feeding on duns, caddis or caddis pupae.

If the river is riffled and the light low, you might actually not see the fish rise to a spinner. But if you fish a slick stream, you can only imagine the trout slowly elevating to the surface and carefully picking the dead may fly.

Why do I stress this point? Well simply because often the fish will switch from taking duns to spinners as your out on the river. They will not text you or let you know, but suddenly you will experience that the duns don't work any more. If you experience that, look on the water bed for spinners and observe the rise form. Very often the trout are keyed in on the dead version of the ones you were fishing as duns earlier.



2 – Most of the time they're not like Jesus on the cross

As I sat there, the first noticeable observation was that very few of the spinners looked like the ones in my fly box – i.e. the spinners were not crucified may fly duns. The spinners take all forms and shapes. Only one in ten look like the spinners I usually tie, the others look more like a death on the road sign.

Also a lot of them are drowned creatures, with parts hanging in the film and other partially submerged. Why the hell do I spend so much time trying the perfect spinner? Can I tie alternative patterns? What about submerged, or partially submerged may fly wrecks. Will they fish as good as the perfect spent spinner?

But even if the dead may flies usually take the form of tangled spaghetti monsters, for the trout their vital triggers are still the body and the wings.

This should open up a range of variations to the traditional spinner pattern. It might be a thought to tie the spinner on curved pupae and emerger hooks. Last year I fished a lot of alternative patterns. Most of them didn't work very well, but the ones I present here are all winners in my spinner box.

3 – Body profile with a curved hook

The classic spent spinner is tied on a straight shank, and works great. But when the spinner fall is heavy, how are you going to make your fly stand out. Of course you can use flash or tinsel. That might just do the trick. But if you at least combine the make-up with a well presented body, your fishing will be even more successful. That can be achieved by using a slightly or heavily curved hook to imitate a partially or nearly fully drowned may fly. It's actually putting the bug to the trout's mouth.

The Diamond Quill spinner, Curved Spinner or the Drowned Spinner Patterns are all good alternatives for putting the body profile right in the nose of the trout.

4 – Dead drift really means DEAD drift when floating a spinner

As you might expect, dead may flies do not move. Therefore, it is important to make sure the drift is as dead as the may fly. This means that your positioning and presentation technique is even more important than during an emerger or dun situation. Use a long leader with a matching tippet to increase the float.

Fish are even more wary in the dark. Don't even think the dusk will mask your false casting or any bad presentation. When a trout feeding on spinners is scared, it's gone. You will not find it again.

5- Only tied-up hackle wings

Let's face it. The most characteristic part of a spinner are the wings. I only use tied-up hackle wings. Never organza, because they tend to collapse after a take or a fish. CDC wings are perfect for making the fly float, but they mask the body profile.

Tied-up hackle makes a great profile and they are durable. You can adjust the angle to determine how deep you would like the fly to float and they never collapse. I only use tied-up hackle wings. These wings take five minutes more to tie, but they are worth the effort.

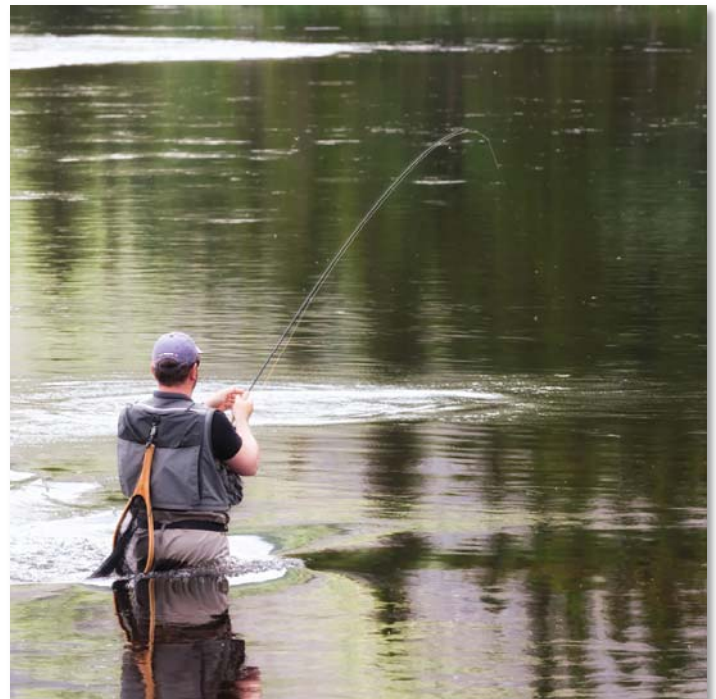
6 – Contrast, contrast, contrast

As the light fades, which is often the case during a spinner fall, the colour of the fly is of lesser importance. The contrast to the sky is however important. Therefore, use, contrary to the gut feeling, dark colours at dusk or night. Deep browns or rusty browns are the go-to colours. I know many like to use flash in their spinners. If I equip my flies with flash, I never use them after the sun has set but in the couple of hours before the dusk sets in.

7 – The extended spinner fall

I finally crawled into my sleeping bag and the tent. Happy with today's fishing and observations.

I woke up to the sun, which is about at 4 a.m. in the morning. That morning I learned that the feeding on a spinner fall continues the next day. Until that day, I have always thought that fish feeding in the morning usually feed on emergers. That's not always true. They might feed on the remaining spinners from the night before. It took some time before I realized that fact, but when I did I caught several good trout on the spinners from I should have used the night before.



Editors Note: Kjell Rakkenes is from Norway and has an excellent blog on his website. Check it out for fly tying patterns and astute observations. <http://www.rakkenes.com/>

From the President by Dave Harris

Well the High Country opening has been and gone. I made it out on the 1st and 2nd of November. On the 1st I went to the Von River with Chris McDonald and Ken Browne. Conditions were pretty good but we only found a few fish, mainly miles of barren river. This is the third year in a row that there have not been a good number of fish in the river. On the 2nd Ken and I went to the top of the Whitestone above the Mt Prospect bridge. We found a few fish but spotting was difficult due to conditions and while I could get hook ups I managed to drop or break off most of them. I guess that is the way it goes.

I missed the High Country opening weekend trip to the Lodge as I decided to go motor racing instead. By the way the motor racing went I should have gone fishing! Since then I have been up the West Coast with Ken (to pick up a caravan he bought in Reefton). The plan was three days fishing on the way home. Things didn't look too rosy when we found the Makarora (and the top of Lake Wanaka) very dirty and didn't look any better the southern end of the West Coast with all the rivers high and dirty as well. There was a bit less water further north and after a night in the Caravan near Reefton we headed down to Lake Brunner to a camp site and then off to fish the Crooked River. It was in reasonable shape but light conditions made spotting difficult. I did manage a good brown and we both had our licence checked. Next day we intended to travel to Hari Hari, set up camp and then fish a couple of spring creeks in the area. Unfortunately it rained all day. Real West Coast rain so too wet to be able to fish and this was joined that night by high winds. The final days fishing was planned in a river near Whataroa. However the previous day's rain put paid to this. A river that doesn't normally discolour was a very dark brown colour so we continued towards home until we found fishable water in the Makarora and a DoC camp nearby. This just showed how quickly a high country river can clear. An afternoon and the following morning saw just two fish spotted (overcast conditions made spotting hard work). Ken got one of the two fish to take his dry but managed to break the hook so it was gone. The commotion spooked the other fish and that was our lot as it was time to head for home.

Lake Alexandrina Trip

We are going to Lake Alexandrina in February. I have booked the South Canterbury Anglers Club Outlet Hut for February 24, 25 & 26. If you are keen to come put these dates in your calendar and get away to try some different fishing. I will make a long weekend of it, going up on the Friday and coming home on the Monday.

The lake is popular fishing from boats (no power boats) and there are other lakes and rivers in the area. The hut cost is \$50 per night so it is not too expensive.

If you are interested in coming contact Dave Harris 03 2156068 or 027 2016722.

Name This Stream Competition

Incredibly only two answers and two correct answers last month from Ian Michelson and Simon Budd. Simon won the \$50 draw correctly identifying the Wairaki River.

The picture this month is by Johnny Mauchline.

Answers by email only please to info@eis.co.nz Correct answers will be placed in a draw for a \$10 Hunting & Fishing voucher sponsored by EIS.

If you have a photo of a Southland stream you would like to include in the competition please email the Editor.



Coming Events

(MM=Monthly Meeting, CM = Committee Meeting)

29th Nov [MM]
6th Dec (CM) Fly Tying
11th Dec Club Trip, Catlins – Meet at Fish & Game 7:00am
13th Dec Mid-week Trip
2017 *****
15th Jan Club Day Trip, meet at Fish & Game – 7am
17th Jan Mid-week trip
17th Jan On the River, Tuesday straight after work, Coal Pit Rd

Club Contacts

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- Editor Johnny Mauchline, 10 Carlyle Street, Matura (021 2877 323) service@eis.co.nz
Items for publication must be submitted to the editor, prior to the 10th of the month
- Librarian Simon Budd, Invercargill
- Lodge Custodian Dave Murphy, 35 Brown Road, Invercargill dmurphy@southnet.co.nz (03 230 4698)
or (0276752324)

Club items for sale

Metal Badges \$15 ea.



Cloth Patches \$12 ea.



Club Meetings

The club meets at 7:30pm on the last Tuesday of each month (except December) at the Fish & Game building, 17 Eye Street, Invercargill (just off Clyde Street). [The February meeting is on the river.](#)

Executive Committee meets on the first Tuesday of the month following the general meeting, except for Dec/Jan, includes fly tying, so come along and bring your gear if you want help with a fly—all members welcome.

Club Resources

The club has an extensive library of Books and Videos, contact the Librarian

A blow up Rubber Boat and a set of five Radio's, which can be borrowed by club members, contact Les Ladbrook.

Club Sponsors



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