

“Ripples”

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

August 2019



www.southlandflyfishingclub.org.nz



Southland Fly Fishing Club

President's Report by Dave

Well it is only a few weeks to the start of the next fishing season. Time to start sorting out all your gear and buying whatever you need for the new season. With that in mind our August meeting will be held at Hunting & Fishing in Leet Street. They will be able to give us a run down on all the new stuff they have for the new season and it will be an opportunity to stock up on goodies.

We will also be holding two fly tying demonstrations at Hunting & Fishing during September (7th & 21st) as well as having a stand at their Fishing Night on September 19th. If you are keen to help out at these events let me know.

Also in September we have a fishing trip to Te Waewae Lagoon on September 8th, a Lodge Working Bee scheduled for September 14th and our Casting Day at Queens Park Cricket Ground on September 29th. It is going to be a busy month.

Thinking a bit further ahead we will have our first Lodge Trip on the first weekend of October. We will be heading away to the Lodge on Friday night to fish Saturday & Sunday. If you haven't been on one of these trips, they are great trips and if you are a relative novice, a great chance to learn from the more experienced members.

Finally, thanks to all those who helped out at the Boat Show, setting up, manning and dismantling the stand. With good numbers it was great.

Fly Tying Competition



The July fly was a woolly buggler and we had six entries. Winner was Dave Harris' fly (above).



All the woolly buggers entered

The August fly is the Spotlight Fly. You should have got your kit from John Day and the September fly is Simon Budd's cicada (below).



Materials:

Size 10 Dry Fly Hook

Thread 6/0

Krystal Flash

Olive Hare's Ice Dubbing or similar

Foam Wings (may need to cut to shape)

Deer Hair, Olive or similar

Tying Instructions:

Crimp the barb

Tie on the thread to half way

Tie in Krystal Flash and tie to the bend

Add dubbing and tie back to the middle of the hook

Tie in the wings

Tie in a small clump of Deerhair then pull the ends back and tie in

Tie in 1 clump of deer hair and wrap twice then loosely wrap a few more times

Push the deer hair back to tighten up (you may need to use a tool for this)

Repeat this step with another 1 or 2 clumps

Tie off

Trim the fly to the desired shape

You may also require to trim the wings at this point to shape also

2019 Competition Results

Arthur Gorton Memorial – Fly Tying

1 st	Chris McDonald	25 points
2 nd	Dave Harris	10 points
3 rd	Julie Cook	7 points

Masters Trophy - Best total

1 st	Simon Budd	34 ½ lb
2 nd	Johnny Mauchline	32 ½ lb
3 rd	Dave Harris	26 ¾ lb

Allan White Trophy – Heaviest Rainbow

No entries

Bill Brown Trophy - Best Condition Factor

1 st	Simon Budd	65.74
2 nd	Simon Budd	60.01
3 rd	Johnny Mauchline	55.34

Presidents Trophy - Heaviest Brown

1 st	Simon Budd	7 lb
2 nd	Simon Budd	6 ¾ lb
3 rd	Johnny Mauchline	6 ½ lb



Club President Dave Harris presenting Simon Budd with the Masters Trophy



Club President Dave Harris presenting Chris McDonald with the Arthur Gorton Memorial Trophy

Mid-winter Madness by Dave

I have made many trips to Mavora in the winter but have not done it in the last few years. This year I decided I was going again and Dayne was keen to join me. Dayne works Saturdays so we planned to head away on Sunday morning and come home Monday evening.

The first selected weekend was a no-goer due to the weather but the next weekend looked good so away we went. Dayne was in charge of food and I was in charge of transport and heating.

I set off just before 9:00am with the boat on behind and picked up Dayne on the way out. We had a pretty good trip to Mavora but the road in was in pretty poor condition. It was also very wet and in some places was extremely muddy due to farming activities. By the time we arrived at the lake the boat and car were both covered in mud.

We followed another boat to the ramp area and there was another boat trailer already parked there. The others that arrived ahead of us were having a first outing in an older Glasscraft boat one of them had just purchased. I showed them where to launch and then set about getting my boat ready to launch. Launching can be a bit of a drama at Mavora as there is no ramp and the shore doesn't slope very steeply. Eventually we got the boat off the trailer and headed up a flat lake to Careys Hut near the top of the lake. We spotted the boat that was already on the lake tied up near West Burn and assumed the occupants were hunting up there.

There was no-one at the hut and it was clean and tidy except there was a broken window someone had tried to cover with a cardboard box. We made a better job of securing the box and it pretty well covered the window.

A quick bite to eat and it was time to head over to where the river flows in to see if we could catch a nice little rainbow to be smoked for an entrée. I was into a fish quite quickly and it came to the net. It was a bit big for an entrée and was in poor condition so it went back. After some time another rainbow came to the net and this one was definitely too big so also went back.

Dayne was having a few issues casting and nothing seemed to be interested in what he was using. I tried to cross the river but it was a bit deep and exposed a couple of holes in my waders. I took the boat across to the other side of the river and explored that side. It was a bit deeper and this restricted how far I could get out, preventing me from getting to the drop-off. No more luck so we headed down to where the West Burn flows into the lake but couldn't find any fish there either, so back to the hut.

I got the fire going easily and after a while Dayne set about getting some food prepared. We had plenty of wood and coal so had a good fire to keep us company for the night. Dayne got his spotlight out to see what he could see near the hut and the only animal he could find was a large cat. It hung around for quite a while before disappearing into the scenery. We also saw lights across the lake when the hunters returned to their boat and headed back down the lake.

Monday dawned clear and cold – there had been a reasonable frost. We got the fire going again and had breakfast. There was no rush to get over to the river as we wanted the sun on the water before we started fishing.

Once over at the river, conditions were good but no sign of any fish. Dayne decided to try the other side and went up the river a bit to where he could cross. Frustratingly we could see a couple of fish in the river but this was closed to fishing. He found the same problems I had the previous day and soon came back. With nothing happening we headed back to the hut for lunch.

We fished again after lunch before heading back to the hut, packing up and heading for home. We had a bit of drama on the way back down the lake.

The fuel tank we were using started to run out and when I moved it to a flatter part of the floor to get the last of the fuel, I managed to break the fuel line at the tank fitting. I was going to use the auxiliary to get home but then realised that it had exactly the same fuel line as the main motor. I simply plugged the auxiliary line into the main motor and returned using the auxiliary tank (a bit of extra oil didn't worry the main motor).

It was a bit of a struggle getting the trailer deep enough to get the boat on but we soon had it on. Once it was secured it was a simple run home, arriving just as it was getting dark.

A good trip, but a few more fish would have been nice. Now all I need to do is fix the fuel line and a couple of other issues with the boat, wash the boat and car and find the leaks in my waders.



Glorious mid-winter Mavora day

Closure on a fishy cold case

(reprinted courtesy of newsroom.co.nz – author: Farah Hancock)

A PhD student has possibly cracked the case on one of New Zealand’s fish mysteries and his work could shed light on risks facing longfin eels.

It’s been an enduring whodunnit. Who and what killed New Zealand’s grayling?

The freshwater fish, about the size of a small trout was once so abundant its babies were shovelled onto market gardens as fertiliser. It also was said to make a fine meal. The widespread, and reportedly beautiful fish disappeared shortly after European settlement.

The grayling (upokororo) is New Zealand’s only freshwater fish to have gone extinct, with the last reported catch in 1923. Factors leading to the extinction were thought to include over-fishing, degraded habitat, and the introduction of trout, which find many of New Zealand’s freshwater fish delicious.

The mystery though, is why did the upokororo also vanish from unfished, pristine, trout-free streams?

University of Auckland PhD candidate Finn Lee may have solved the puzzle and his findings could be used to save some of the other 72 percent of freshwater fish species teetering on the edge of extinction.

“We know they were super widespread and abundant, and we know they went extinct pretty quickly relatively recently, so it’s a pretty sad story.”

Lee’s paper looks at whether the upokororo’s “dispersal habit” was to blame.



Illustration: Frank Edward Clarke Public Domain

Upokororo, like many New Zealanders who came after them, were partial to embarking on the big OE.

Amphidromous fish, such as the upokororo, migrate from freshwater to the sea and back again as part of their life cycle. What they did when they returned from their OE is the possible key to the mystery.

Unlike North American salmon, which return to the family home after their time at sea, it’s thought upokororo did not seek out the stream they were born in.

Instead Lee thinks they chose the first stream they came upon, potentially ending up in the equivalent of dangerous slums, at the mercy of ravenous trout and getting scooped up to fertilise cauliflowers. In ecological language, these fish slums are called sinks.

“The fish that end up there, they’re either going to die without reproducing, or they might produce a few offspring, but not enough to replace the fish going in.”

If sinks are like slums, their counterparts referred to as “sources” are the leafy suburbs of ecological environments where space and food are plentiful, threats minimal and reproduction is easy.

“If you’ve got some sources and some sinks, the whole species can go extinct, even while you’ve got some good quality habitat,” said Lee.

While there were probably sinks before European settlers’ arrival, degradation, harvesting and predation may have rapidly increased the percentage of slums and swallowed up many leafy suburbs.

Lee’s detective leg-work included looking at old newspaper clippings to understand where the fish were found and in what numbers.

“There was quite a lot of interest in them back in the day. If someone happened to catch a whole bunch it would quite often make it into the local paper.”

He found around 200 articles, some with dates and locations, one item was a menu for a banquet full of species now in dire situations. Some recounted enormous numbers of fish.

“There was one for the Hutt River, there were so many grayling going up the river, there was a mill operating – a turning wheel – and there was so many grayling going up they clogged the whole thing up.”

Collating the information in the articles helped paint a picture of distribution and quantity seen or caught over time. He also tracked the many reasons people were suggesting might be the cause for the species’ sudden de-

cline. Trout got the most pointed fingers, followed by fishing. Forest clearance causing water quality decline was mentioned, as well as factories belching pollutants into water. Sulphur overflows from thermal springs were also put forward as a possible cause of upokororo's fading from rivers.

This information was then modelled to work out an estimated date of extinction. The date range of 1924 to 1972 arrived at lined up with the last recorded catch in 1923 and the sporadic reports of sightings which continued into the 1960s.

The result he found was if upokororo had returned to their river of birth, around 30 percent of each generation of fish would need to have been fished or eaten by trout.

“That would have had to have been happening across every river, simultaneously. That’s not very likely.”

If they had returned to rivers at random, the number of “sinks” or fish slums would not need to be high to drive the upokororo to extinction.

With five percent of rivers as slums it would take just five percent of each generation of fish to be eaten by trout or caught by humans to drive the species into extinction.

Can the past inform the future?

While there’s satisfaction in potentially closing a cold case, there’s still the question of what can be learnt for the future.

Lee said his research could shed light on the prospects of similar indigenous species which go to sea, then return to random rivers. Too many fish slums, combined with other risks such as predation and fishing could prove to be a species extinction tipping point, even if good habitat remains.

Native fish expert Stella McQueen said Lee’s research is relevant to ongoing discussion about eels.

Longfin eels are listed as at risk and declining yet are part of the Quota Management System and fished commercially. In 2013, a Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment report written by Dr Jan Wright called for a moratorium on commercial fishing. This did not happen, although the quota has been lowered.

Scientists worry as eels can take at least 30 to 40 years before they reach breeding age, and only breed once, the effect of commercial fishing is yet to be felt.

Eels are born at sea and make their way to New Zealand. Like the upokororo, they go randomly to various rivers.

Eelers often point to the fact that 70 percent of the country is not fished. McQueen calls this “bullshit” as a strategy to preserve eels.

“Not all the habitat would be economically worthwhile for commercial eelers to target. Not all suitable habitat is equally desirable to eels.”

So, the 70 percent, could include fish slums, and the 30 percent commercial eelers are targeting could be leafy suburbs.

“You can’t fish one catchment heavily and not fish another catchment and think you’ve got a safe area ... you can’t absolutely trash the South Island, but you’ve got all the North Island eels going out to spawn. That’s not ok. The eels are coming back to the North and South Island and are just going to be decreasing in numbers.”

For whitebait species, McQueen thinks the situation could be slightly different. As they don’t go as far out to sea as eels which migrate somewhere close to Tonga, there’s a higher chance whitebait return to the river they came from.

Four of five whitebait species are threatened and like the threatened longfin eel there is still a commercial trade in them.

Lee, in his search for newspaper reports of upokororo came across an observation made in 1938 by Gerry Stokell, a keen freshwater fish citizen scientist, regarding the now extinct upokororo:

“The fact that this fish is now unprotected by law is a standing reproach on the administration of New Zealand’s wildlife. Its fate forms a melancholy illustration of the indifference with which New Zealand statesmen regard the natural resources of their country, and of the danger of placing control of indigenous animals in the hands of those whose chief interest lies in killing them.”

Upokororo was finally protected in 1951, long after the last recorded catch of 1932. Bizarrely, it’s also the only native fish to have legal protection under the Wildlife Act.

Boat Show by Dave

We had a stand at the Southland Boat show again this year. We had quite a lot of interest and managed to run out of flyers for the Fly Fishing Course in January. Setting up was pretty easy with Murray, Dayne, Julie, Jan and myself to carry out the work. The stand was manned by Julie, Chris, Dayne and myself over the two days. Murray returned Sunday to give us a hand in packing up and this was completed in no time. We also managed to sell a few copies of Fish & Game’s Trout Fishing in Southland book and some of their lake maps. Thanks to all.

Cover Photo by Dave

Dayne and Chris on our stand at the Southland Boat Show.

Coming Events

(MM=Monthly Meeting, CM = Committee Meeting)

27 th August	MM	Meeting to be at Hunting & Fishing
3 rd Sept	CM	Fly tying
7 th Sept	Demo	Fly Tying demonstration @ Hunting & Fishing
8 th Sept		Club Trip (winter) Fish & Game 9:00am
14 th Sept		Lodge Working Bee
19 th Sept		Hunting & Fishing Fisherman's night
21 st Sept	Demo	Fly Tying demonstration @ Hunting & Fishing
24 th Sept	MM	Fish & Game speaker
29 th Sept		Casting Day at Queens Park 1:00pm

Club Contacts

- Address **Southland Fly Fishing Club, PO Box 1689, Invercargill, New Zealand**
- Website www.southlandflyfishingclub.org.nz
- President Dave Harris, 30 Baxter Street Invercargill (03 215 6068) dcharris@southnet.co.nz
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- Editor Vacant - Send articles to Dave Harris dcharris@southnet.co.nz
Items for publication must be submitted to the editor, prior to the 10th of the month
- Librarian Simon Budd
- 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 St, West Invercargill, Invercargill 9810. [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 Chris McDonald.

Club Sponsors



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