

“Ripples”

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

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www.southlandflyfishingclub.org.nz



Southland Fly Fishing Club

President's Report by Dave

Well, another month gone but not as much fishing as hoped for. Once again, the weather and river conditions meant that fishing was off the agenda at times during the month. We did manage to get on the river for the Fly Fishing Course (and four of us went out on the Saturday evening to check all was okay on the river) and we had a Club trip to Lake Alexandrina. I am trying to plan a trip away to one of my favourite rivers but trying to guess the weather and fit around other commitments is proving to be a little difficult but March is looking pretty clear at the moment so hopefully we will get some better weather and nobody will come along and fill my calendar with other activities.

Our mid-week trip had to be cancelled again in January due to the rivers all being too high. Hopefully we will get some of these trips held during the rest of the season.

The Fly Fishing Course went well with 17 people attending and most of them were complete beginners and didn't have gear. This resulted in Chris and myself digging out rods & reels to supplement the five rods that the Club owns. We had enough in the end and even managed to keep most people happy with the correct winding hand on the reels. As usual a couple of people needed their own reels reversed and this is usually relatively simple. I did come across one older reel of a type that I hadn't reversed before but it too turned out to be simple to reverse the drag.

The Lake Alexandrina trip was interesting and a little frustrating. Very interesting were the southern crested grebes nesting in the lake outlet stream as well as the black stilt I spotted by Lake McGregor when I went for a walk that way. Frustrating was that the new rig carefully selected to get down deep enough to catch the rainbows was only partially successful.

I was out on the Upper Oreti recently and quickly fished (unsuccessfully) through one of the beats. When I arrived at the beat there was another car there (a guide who had taken his clients downstream). The beat I wanted to fish was vacant so I was happy with that. The river looked in pretty good condition but I had difficulty spotting fish as there was a green tinge in the water and I just couldn't see them. It was well over an hour before I spotted a fish. At the top of the beat, I encountered another angler who had walked down the next beat up. We had a discussion on where the beat boundary was as I felt he had fished the top couple of pools on the beat I was on. Normally you wouldn't know about this but I had moved reasonably quickly and I think he had started late. It would be good if Fish & Game would put some form of marker at the beat boundary (as they did on the original beats above Three Kings). I headed back to the car and decided I had time to stop somewhere else on the way home. The preferred spot would have been the So Big beat but there was a camper parked there so I went further downstream and fished a short section of river there. I spotted fish much easier here and after dropping two, finally got a nice 4lber to the net. Interesting that even without any overseas anglers the bottom four beats of the Oreti were all fished that day although the Windley River beat was free. Sadly, one of the beat signs had been torn off its mounting posts and Fish & Game will need to replace it. Clearly some people don't like the system.

We have a fly tying display at the Gore "On The Fly Festival" on February 20th providing the covid-19 alert levels allow this to go ahead. As I write this on February 15th we are at alert level 2 and the festival will not go ahead at this level but the alert level will be reviewed on the 17th. If it drops to level 1 again the festival could well be worth a visit. Details elsewhere in this Ripples.

Unusually the Club Lodge has been empty for some time. This is a great place to spent a couple of days fishing Northern Southland, so if you have a few days and are planning to fish the upper rivers give David Murphy a call and book the Lodge for a few days. I will probably do so but have to try and fit it in with other plans.

Cover Photo by Dave

Southern crested grebe on the outlet stream at Lake Alexandrina next to its nest.

Fly Fishing Course.

We held our annual Fly Fishing Course at the end of January. It didn't look like we would have a full course this year but then suddenly we were oversubscribed and Chris actually accepted 17 participants instead of the usual 16. There was good mix of people with different ages and gender and the furthest travelled actually came down from Christchurch specifically for the course.

I was a bit worried before the course as there had been quite a lot of rain up country and the rivers were above normal. I had actually checked these out on the Friday before the course and wasn't sure the Mataura was in a suitable condition but Mike had checked it out on the way down and it was in a condition that he would fish it. However, with the level being up we decided that the usual spot above the Wyndham bridge would not be suitable for the on the water casting tuition and this was moved to behind the Wyndham Racecourse.



Class of 2021

The course followed the normal agenda with Mike talking about where the fish are, what they eat, what gear you need and how to catch them. Part way through the morning Gerald from Invercargill Hunting and Fishing arrived with a generous gift for all the participants and a fishing vest, courtesy of Manic Tackle, to be given to one of the course participants. The draw for the vest was won by Ngā Taweroa and she proudly wore it on the river on Sunday. Mid afternoon and it was time to head out to James Hargest College for casting tuition. Normally I have to stay behind and sort out all the dishes after afternoon tea but Julie simply asked everyone to wash their own and I was away pretty much straight after everyone else after setting the alarm and locking up.

It took some time to sort out rods with about nine people using borrowed gear and others with new rods they hadn't used before. As normal some needed the winding direction on the reels changed over, some needed leaders sorted etc. Once underway the standard of casting varied with some doing quite well while others started wide of the mark. All the usual problems – letting the rod go back too far, not enough effort on the back cast, too much wrist action etc.



Gerald from Invercargill Hunting & Fishing presenting Ngā Taweroa with a fishing vest from Manic Tackle.

Fly Fishing Course (cont)

Mike, Chris, Julie and I decided we needed to check out the river where we were going to go on Sunday, so after a quick bite to eat it was out to Wyndham to have a look at the river behind the racecourse. It was a bit more coloured than I would normally fish but we managed to land five fish between us for the night, so clearly there were fish there and they could be caught. It was also clear that there was plenty of room for the group to practice casting but there was not enough room for the groups to split up for the afternoon fishing there so some would have to travel elsewhere.



Setting up ready for casting tuition

Everyone assembled on Sunday morning behind the racecourse although one or two found the track a bit rough for their cars (and Mike left his car at the start of the track as he had seen what it was like the night before). The morning saw the usual tangles and a lot of lost flies. People were dropping their back casts and instead of catching in the grass behind the flies were dropping into the gravel and snapping off. There was one very small fish caught in the morning. It was so small the angler didn't realise he had it on until he tried to cast.

After lunch we split up into groups and headed for different parts of the river. I took a group to Coal Pit Road for the afternoon fishing. We fished for a while without much action and then spent the rest of the afternoon discussing fly fishing. Finally we all met up at the Wyndham bridge to have a final chat and sort out borrowed rod etc. It seems that no fish were caught in the afternoon.

Thanks go to our course sponsors, Invercargill Hunting & Fishing and Manic Tackle. I also want to extend my thanks to all the Club members who helped out on the course and to Mike for coming down.



Casting & fishing demonstration at Wyndham

Mid-Week Trip - February 24th by Dave

If you are planning on coming on the mid-week trip on February 24th let me know by text (027 201 6722) or email (dcharris@southnet.co.nz). Don't try and ring as I will be out of cell coverage for a couple of days before. We will depart from my place, 30 Baxter Street, Invercargill at 9:00am.

Club Trip to Lake Alexandrina by Dave

We had another Club trip to Lake Alexandrina early in February. For those that don't know Lake Alexandrina, it is close to Tekapo. It has no fishable inlet streams and its outlet flows to the much smaller Lake McGregor and then on into Lake Tekapo. It was pretty much the same crew that went two years ago with Roger, Julie, Cole and myself with Jim along in place of Alan. We once again had use of the South Canterbury Anglers Club hut at the lake outlet.

Julie and Jim set off on the Wednesday to allow a day fishing the canals on the way up while Roger and I headed up Thursday and Cole was already in the area as he had been fishing the Tekapo River.

Jim was off to good start on Thursday morning when he landed a small salmon almost straight away on the Tekapo Canal. That's was to be the only fish they caught from the canals but they did witness a 21lb rainbow being landed.

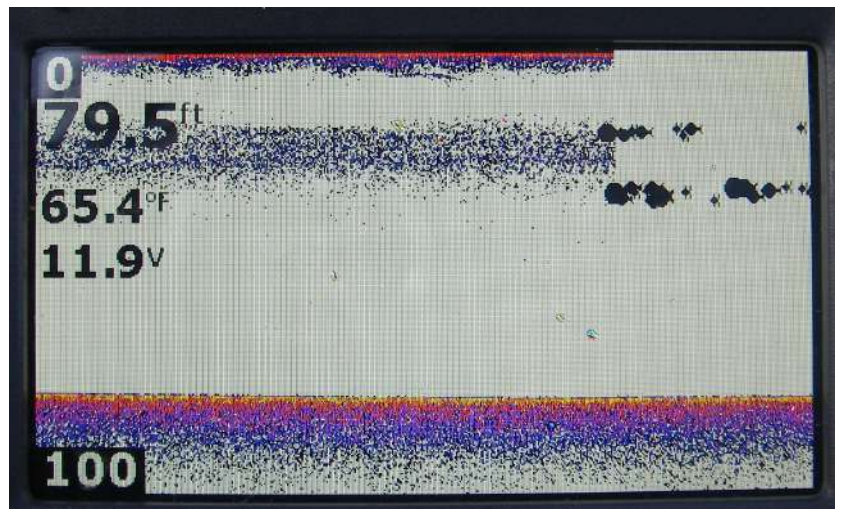
Roger and I unloaded the kayak on arrival at the lake before heading up to the hut as I can't open the tail door with the kayak on the roof rack. We found Cole waiting for us at the hut. As soon as we opened the hut door we were greeted by an unpleasant smell. It actually took us until Friday morning to find the offending rubbish in the bin under the sink.

Some time was spent on Friday afternoon taking photos of the southern crested grebes that were nesting in the outlet stream just down from the lake. These birds build a nest on the water but are normally very wary of people and tend to stay well away. However, lake conditions this year appear to have been unsuitable for nesting on the lake and the birds had moved to the outlet stream as this was more suitable. I was told there had been 24 pairs nesting at one stage. There were nests at all stages from some still being built to some that had hatched chicks and others that looked to have been abandoned. Unfortunately, I only had my fishing camera with me so was somewhat restricted in my ability to photograph the birds.

Saturday morning and it was time to get out on the lake and try and capture some fish. There are strict regulations on the lake and you are not allowed to use lead lines, wires lines, paravanes or downriggers when trolling or harling. The only method of getting down to where the fish are is to use a fast sinking fly line. Both Julie and I had upgraded our setups from the previous visit, hopeful of an improved catch rate. The rainbows are generally feeding on small fish that are in turn feeding on plankton. The plankton rise in the water during the night but sink back down during the day. Of course the fish do the same and you need to get your fly or lure down to the level where the plankton is at to catch the rainbows.

Julie joined me in the Kayak while Roger & Jim fished from the SCAC rowboat with Cole on the oars. This was generally the way it was for all the fishing although Jim joined me in the Kayak for one outing. With our deeper sinking rigs Julie and I had the most success with two fish landed each and one lost. Jim modified his setup to try and get down and he managed to land one fish. The family that Julie had borrowed a rod off last trip turned up for one day and returned after a couple of hours with four fish. They had also lost one and released another. Clearly their setup was still better than what we had.

On the Sunday afternoon Julie headed off to paint the town red (that is what she said



Screen of the fish finder on Dave's kayak. Most of the screen shows the plankton while the right side shows what the finder thinks are fish. The change in the display is because the fish indication button was pushed.

Club Trip to Lake Alexandrina (cont)

she was doing) and the rest of us went for a look at the Tekapo Canal. We had some fishing gear but didn't fish. We did stop to help an angler that looked like he had a big fish on and no net but when the fish finally came into sight it was quite small so Roger's net was not needed. Walking along the edge of the canal we spotted a few fish cruising but none of these were the huge fish the canals are known for.

Roger and I headed home on Monday while the others stayed another day. Apparently, they had a fairly exciting outing in the row boat when the wind came up and they struggled to get back to the shore but eventually made it safely if a bit wet.

Thanks to the South Canterbury Anglers Club for the use of their hut.

Julie with a 5½lb rainbow at Lake Alexandrina



February Club Day by Dave

A reasonable turnout of five for the February Club Day. Simon P and Daniel joined with me and Gerda joined up with Julie. It was decided that the Aparima looked like a good river to fish. Conditions were forecast to be cloudy with a few spots of rain to start with, then warming up nicely.

There was a quick detour to Daniel's house as he decided a fishing rod was a good thing to take and then the ladies had a bit of an issue when Gerda discovered she had left some of her gear on the footpath outside Fish & Game.

The river looked to be in pretty good condition although there was a lot of growth on the stones and some were quite slippery. Spotting was always going to be difficult due to the cloud conditions but a few fish were spotted and then disappeared once cast to or even before being cast to.

The blokes had a tough time with Dave finally hooking a fish, only for it to drop off. Finally, Daniel managed to hook up on a nice fish and it came to the net. I am not sure why we weren't hooking up as conditions looked good and there was plenty of good looking spots, many of which we fished carefully.

Meanwhile the ladies were having a similar results with two fish hooked but only one landed.

February Monthly Meeting - On the River

The February Monthly Meeting will be on the river at Coal Pit Road on Tuesday 23rd February.

Chris McDonald will be cooking a BBQ for us starting at 6:00pm.

If you are coming please let Chris (027 423 7016) by know by Friday 19th so he can make sure he has the right amount of food and drink to keep everyone happy.

On the Fly Festival - Gore - February 20th

Gore District Council will be holding their "On the Fly Festival" on River Terrace, East Gore from 3:00pm to 6:00pm on February 20th provided we have returned to alert level 1. The Southland Fly Fishing Club will be putting on a fly tying demonstration.

There are plenty of interesting activities and guests associated with fly fishing.

Details are here [On the fly](#) but you will need to scroll down to get details of all who will be there.

Coming Events (MM=Monthly Meeting, CM = Committee Meeting)

20 th Feb		Gore "On the Fly Festival"
23 rd Feb	MM	This meeting is "On the river" --- BBQ Tea about 6pm Let Chris (027 423 7016) know if you are coming by Friday 19 th ,
24 th Feb		Mid-week Trip – Dave Harris 027 201 6722
2 nd Mar	CM	Fly Tying
14 th Mar		Club Day Trip, meet at Fish & Game 7am
24 th Mar		Mid-week Trip
30 th Mar	MM	

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
- Secretary Chris McDonald, 334 Racecourse Road, Invercargill (03 217 3733) mcdonald.ccnd@kinect.co.nz
- Editor 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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