

“Ripples”

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

November 2023



www.southlandflyfishingclub.org.nz



*Southland Fly
Fishing Club*

President's Report by Dave

Well another month without much fishing. The weather conditions and river levels haven't been what I like. I did have one day when I found nice clear water on a fine sunny day without much wind. I had a good day after a shaky start with the first fish hooked coming off and the second breaking the knot. However, the next five came to the net. I would have liked to have walked further up the river but I had to get back to town so I called it quits quite early. As I write this it is not looking that good until Saturday but I am in Wellington on Saturday. The weather might let me get out for a short day earlier in the week (and that could delay this Ripples for a day).

The Club activities have been going reasonably well. We had five at the Lodge for the second night of the November Lodge Trip and there were six of us out on the November Club Trip.

There also looks as though there is going to be an upswing in the Lodge bookings. We have a couple of members from Otago who are looking at using it and just this past weekend a member used it for the first time. This is great as it is a good facility that is under used.

For the November Club Meeting I have Cohen Stewart from Fish & Game coming along to talk to us about the women anglers survey and what they find good and bad about trout fishing. I am sure Cohen will have a power point presentation and I will put this up on the Club website after the meeting. You find it under Fish & Game in the menu on the home page.

As you will know we have our annual Fly Fishing Course coming up at the end of January. At this stage enrolments are pretty good but we still have a few spaces. If you know anyone that is keen to learn to fly fish tell them about it. Full details are on the website. We will require assistance with the casting practice on the Saturday afternoon (January 27th) and with the fishing on the Sunday afternoon (January 28th). If you can help out with either of these let Chris know (027 423 7016)

Early next month I am off to Te Anau for my annual trip there. I made the first of these in 1992 and have been up there for just over a week every year since. Some years have been good, some have been great and some have been pretty difficult. Hopefully this year will not be one of the difficult ones.

We have a few things coming up with a mid-week trip coming on December 7th and a Club Trip on December 10th. The December Club Trip traditionally heads out towards the Catlins. This is about the only time some of us head in this direction so it is always a bit of a trip into the unknown.

November Meeting

At the November Club Meeting we will have Cohen Stewart along to talk about the results of the survey of women anglers and what their views, issues and wants are with regard to trout fishing. This survey was carried out by the Otago University for Fish & Game Southland. This will be especially interesting for women anglers as it is probably the first time women's views have been considered. The results of this survey are on the agenda for the New Zealand Fish & Game Council Meeting in Wellington on November 24th & 25th. It will be interesting too see what actions the NZ Fish & Game Council take from this.

Women Anglers in Aotearoa
New Zealand:
Understanding women's
participation in, and
perspectives of, freshwater
fishing



November Club Trip by Dave

In spite of the weather forecast promising strong winds a total of six members turned up for the November Club Trip. We split into two groups, with Gerda looking after Nathan and Zanda while I took Daniel and Isaac. Both groups headed to the mid Mataura in the hope the Hokonui Hills would give us a little shelter from the wind. Gerda's group went a little further upstream while we went to an easy access.

The wind was nowhere near as bad as expected but there was a fair bit of water in the river and it was carrying quite a bit of colour. We got set up and decided to head downstream as this looked like the best option. Isaac soon spotted some fish rising and as he had a dry fly on decided to see if he could tempt any of them. After a few casts nothing had risen to his fly and they had stopped rising. I had a nymph on a dropper below a black beetle and cast this out to see if any would take a nymph. Much to my surprise a small fish came up and took the black beetle. I soon had it to the bank and released it without bothering with the net.

We tried to head down the river and the best option looked to be to cross to the other side as there was a lot of accessible water on that side while there were a lot of willows on our side. No joy, there was just too much water for a safe crossing. We looked at the option of working down through the willows but this led nowhere so we decided to head up stream. There was some good looking water initially but we didn't find any fish there. Another attempt to cross the river was unsuccessful. To get further up we had to go around some willows and while heading up Isaac had an encounter with an electric fence but there was no long term damage. Once back on the river we had a relatively short looking section of good water. Once again Isaac spotted a fish rising and cast to it. It rose to his fly but didn't hook up. However shortly afterwards he managed to tempt another fish that did hook up. Daniel also managed to land a fish here. Once we had reached the top of this section we decided to head back to the car and head to another access. No dramas with the electric fences on the way back.

We checked out the next access downstream but couldn't get very close to the river so headed back down below Gore to a place I fish reasonably often. No activity here although Daniel did spot a fish but didn't get a chance to cast to it. After a fair bit of unsuccessful casting we decided to finish early and headed home.

Not a very successful day but at least all three of us managed to land a fish and the wind wasn't anywhere near as bad as forecast. Unfortunately the river conditions made fishing a lot more challenging than it should have been.

November Club Trip by Gerda

Good turnout for our club trip so we split up into two cars. Leaving for the Mataura River. Our wee group was Nathan and son Zanda and myself which was really lovely as we had been neighbours and friends a long time ago. We spent the morning fishing, battling wind and trying to spot fish in rather discoloured water ohh and did I mention untangling tangled line. Zanda went away up ahead and managed to hook up but then lost his tippet and all. We decided after lunch we'd find another spot so driving further up country we came upon a wee side road and found a beautiful stream where we spent the remainder of the day, the stream being the Waimea. So, Nathan went downstream, Zanda went upstream and I stayed in the middle. Bit later Zanda came back said he'd seen fish but couldn't get to them, and since I had my waders on, he thought I'd have a better chance. Arriving at the spot, in I went. After a while I did hook up with a feisty little fish I had him real close still fighting mad and while I was fumbling for my net in the middle of the stream he came off, still was my first hookup of the season so still felt good. After that nothing much happened sadly no-one in our group managed to bring one to the net.

Cover Photo by Gerda

Zanda fishing on the Waimea during the November Club Trip.

November Lodge Trip by Dave

I picked up Chris relatively early on Friday night as we were meeting Ian at the lodge and he was not familiar with getting anything going. Ian was there when we got there but hadn't been there long.

After some discussion we decided not to head into the Von River on Saturday morning as it hasn't been great fishing the last few years. Our river of choice would be the Upukerora but that meant we needed to be there reasonably early as there are not many access points and this was the first weekend it was open for the season.

Up early and away, we got to our access point of choice and there was on-one else there so that was good. All set up and over to the river. Ian and I headed downstream a bit and fished a few pools below the access point before heading up. The river wasn't as clear as expected but was definitely clear enough to fish. We saw nothing and didn't contact anything in the sections we blind fished and soon caught up with Chris. He hadn't found any fish either. We came to a spot where there are always fish and I thought I briefly saw one. From a bit above it was clearly a fish so I moved back down and it was quite visible. Fortunately the broom bushes on the edge of the river helped to hide us so the fish didn't suspect anything. I flicked my flies out just to get ready to cast and then cast to the fish. It didn't hesitate, coming straight towards us and taking the nymph. No need to wait for the indicator dry to dip, I struck as soon as it closed its mouth and I had a good fish on. I had a bit of drama trying to unfold my net and had to pass it to Chris to sort but eventually the fish was in the net. At the top of the pool Ian thought he may have seen another fish but we couldn't see it and a bit of blind casting revealed nothing.

We continued up the river and Chris was working his way up a likely looking piece of water when I spotted a fish well ahead of him. It looked to be a sitter but one cast was all Chris got before it moved off. We continued up the river with some really good looking water not revealing any fish. We were all fishing a long run with a good high bank behind it making spotting easier when I spotted a fish. It immediately moved from close to the edge to the middle of the current. I thought I had spooked it but this fish wasn't going to be spooked easily. I cast to it, the indicator dipped and I lifted. There was a moment of tension and nothing. I wasn't happy but when I looked into the current the fish was still there. I cast to it again. Same thing happened, indicator dipped, brief tension and then nothing. The fish was still there! A couple more casts and then the indicator dips, I lift and this time the tension remains and a small rainbow came to the net.

It was time for lunch. I changed flies and went and had another look to see if the little rainbow was still around thinking it might take another fly. No, it had finally disappeared. A couple of four wheelers with three people aboard came down and stopped for a chat. One had a fly rod and had clearly been fishing, while the other four wheeler had a deer on the back. They had been out overnight and actually had two deer.

(Continued on page 5)



Ian almost there on the Lodge Trip



Landed

November Lodge Trip (cont)

(Continued from page 4)

We continued up the river searching for fish but found nothing. We reached a pool where a couple of years ago we had caught some good fish but the pool wasn't anywhere near as good as it had been previously and there were no fish to be seen. A bit further up the valley opened out and the river became a bit more braided. We decided it was time to turn around and make the long walk back to the car.

As we headed down towards Mossburn I took the others to look at a still water that neither knew about. I had been there before but never fished it. There was another angler there but he hadn't caught anything. I suspect there needs to be fish rising to make it a good place to be.

The Mossburn Pub was pretty busy and we went into the restaurant to find somewhere to sit. John arrived soon after us and I got a message from Simon to say he and Jake would be a little while. They had been out on another river and walked a long way so were running late. They eventually arrived and reported a pretty good day.

After some discussion we all decided to fish closer to the Lodge on the Sunday. I would take Ian with me and Chris, Simon and John would fish together. Jake had returned home on Saturday evening. The access I planned to take Ian to already had another angler (just, he was still in the car) so we went to the next access. Once again, the river was carrying a bit of colour but looked to be fishable although spotting was going to be difficult. The river is quite braided where we were so there was plenty of likely looking water to fish. As we worked up the river, we both managed to land a fish.

We were getting towards a spot where I had spotted fish on the previous Lodge Trip and I was hopeful there might be some there to spot. Not to be. We came across some river work where the river had been diverted through a narrow channel and a low weir of gravel put across the river. The flow into the diversion was such that it was not possible to cross. Later investigation told me the work had been done by Environment Southland as emergency work without a resource consent. They have to apply for a retrospective consent and it will be interesting to see what reasoning they use. A very bad example when those who make the rules and enforce them don't actually follow them.

We headed back down and fished below the access without any further success. Then suddenly there was very dirty water flowing down the middle of the river. Just above us the river had formed a new braid and this dropped off a low grassy bank and I suspect part of this had collapsed. We had to wade through the dirty water to get back to the car and great care was needed as we couldn't see the bottom. Time to go.

All in all not a bad weekend but the river conditions could have been better.



River diversion by Environment Southland.
No way we could cross this safely.



River diversion and the weir across the river in the background.

How I Got into Fly Fishing by Ian Moodie

Ian Moodie, a Canadian who more or less immigrated to South Korea.

When Dave asked me to write a piece for the newsletter, I happily obliged. When I asked him what to write about, he said, “Anything you want,” so that is exactly what you will get. Today, I'd like to share my story of how I got into fly fishing and the involvement of the Southland Fly Fishing Club in that process.

I am originally from Western Canada, where fishing is quite popular. In fact where I lived, mostly in Alberta and British Columbia (BC), fishing is one of the biggest past-times, especially for men and boys. Like many, I grew up bait and spin fishing. This was the 80s and 90s, so unlike today, there were not many resources available. We called it fishing, but in hindsight it was mostly casting. When I did catch a fish, it was a great occasion, a time for celebration. But those times were few and far between, and it seemed like such a great mystery, mostly attributed to luck. There were a couple brown trout from my grandma's dugout (a small reservoir) on her farm, a few fish visiting family friends out east, a few lake trout here and there, the odd steelhead, a few rainbow trout, and salmon. The salmon and rainbow trout of Western BC are what really got me into fishing. In high school, I remember going out with my friend Brian every Sunday while our families were in church. It was a great time, and so nice to be outside. But we did not catch many. Brian was better than me, but for him as well, a nice salmon or steelhead was rare. If we got a few per season, we were happy.

In university (the first round), I moved to the city and mostly forgot about fishing. But my mom and dad had a boat and got into salmon fishing. Some years they caught a lot of native sockeyes, which are quite delicious. I went with them from time to time and caught a few. What a difference it makes knowing a bit about what to do and where to go.

After university, to keep it short, my life was kind of aimless. I realized I hated work, at least the kind that I was doing, and I got a job teaching English in South Korea. It was a great adventure, and it turned into a successful career. I went back to school to get a master's degree in Applied Linguistics (I had always been interested in linguistics, especially sociolinguistics, that is, the study of language in social situations or of why people say the things they do when they do). After that, I was qualified to teach as a lecturer in Korean universities and did that for some. As I gained experience, I got more interested in the academic side, and put my feel-

(Continued on page 7)



Ian with a nice brown in the upper Taieri recently

How I Got into Fly Fishing (cont)

(Continued from page 6)

ers out to go to graduate school again, this time for a PhD programme to learn how to do research. New Zealand was my first choice. I had a close friend, Marse, who is a kiwi that went to the University of Otago. I had never heard of it, but he said I would love it here, and he was right! It turned out to be a great fit for me. I was accepted and got a scholarship, my wife got a leave of absence, and off we went! We loved being outdoors and explored much of the South Island in our free time, especially Otago, the Canterbury Plains, Southland, and a bit of Fiordland and the West Coast.

Before my final year, when returning from collecting data in South Korea, I decided that I was going to take advantage of the opportunity and go full on into fishing. So I brought over a bunch of gear, mostly spinning rods and lures and the like. It turned out that my good friend Rens had the same idea. We simultaneously got the urge to fish, and fish we did. We dragged our partners out whenever we could, too. I don't recall how it started, but somehow we ended up with a crew, our own little fishing club, which was an international crew. It was Andrew from Tasmania, Joe from Dunedin, Rens from the Netherlands, me, and the captain, Luciano from Argentina. Luci had a boat and was a better fisherman than us all. And he had a mentor, John, who grew up in Milton and generously shared a lifetime of secrets. Go to such and such spot at such and such time and do such and such. It worked! We often caught fish: Boatloads of blue cod on a couple of occasions, a few salmon that escaped from the canals, and a few big rainbows and browns in the lakes and canals. It was fun. Only Andrew and Luci could fly fish, and Luci had the passion and convincing spirit to drag us all into it.

I was reluctant at first. Growing up in Canada, I had the impression that fly fishing was an elitist sport, that it was an ephemeral art, that it was too hard for me. But on my birthday, Luci took me to Hunting and Fishing and I bought myself a cheap Airflow combo and some flies. I got books from the library and practiced casting

(Continued on page 8)



The international crew: Ian (top right) with Rens and Luci below, Andrew in the middle, Joe below him, and special guest, Cousin Lorin (top left)

How I Got into Fly Fishing (cont)

(Continued from page 7)

on the lawn in a park next to Arthur Street School until I felt ready for the water. It was hard. And frustrating. So many tangles of mysterious origin. So many flies lost in the shrubs and trees.

But then came that first fish: A 2-pound brown in the Southern Reservoir on a damselfly nymph. Wow! So this is fly fishing! This is what it is like. This is what it feels like. What a rush! Koreans have a cool word for this. The direct translation is 'hand taste'. Can you get it? I love that metaphor. You can feel all the subtle movements, the jiggling, the head shakes, the power. And then it slows down and you get it in the net. You have tapped into something primal. You have just conquered nature.

The tug is the drug, right? Literally, as I understand it, hooking fish (and landing them) involves our dopamine system, dopamine being a hormone and neurotransmitter involved in pleasure, learning, habit formation, and addiction, among other things (but this is not really my area of expertise). It's hard to avoid this pun, but I was hooked! I kept on. Less and less did I touch my spinning gear and more and more my fly rod. But it was not easy; in fact, it was really hard. Plenty of spooked fish and a few breakoffs. Early on, those were the ones that haunted my memory. But I had to keep learning. I had to figure this out.

Then, one day, Rens came across the Southland Fly Fishing Club's annual course and signed up. It was led by the revered Mike Weddell, who had become a god-like figure in our eyes. We studied his books and read all his columns, looking for additional clues and secrets to NZ trout. Unfortunately, Rens couldn't make it, but I got the lucky chance to replace him.

And that course has made all the difference; in fact, it's fair to say that it changed my life. After learning about trout habitats and food (little brown things in the water), how to read the water, how to cast, and how to upstream nymph without an indicator, things started to change for me. No longer was fly fishing this ephemeral, elitist past-time. It was accessible and possible. After that course, hookups became more frequent. No longer was everything such a frustrating mystery. I began to understand when, why, and where to fish, and why things were happening and why things weren't. The luck aspect diminished in my mind, and it became more about skill. For the first time, I could approach a new water and feel confident. I could begin to see a nice riffle, seam, or rise and believe, "I'm going to catch a fish on this next cast!"

The part about it that changed my life most of all is the well-being aspect: the camaraderie with fellow fisher-people, the constant learning, the immersion in nature, and the present-mindedness required to fish well. Being a postgraduate student was not easy. In fact, it was the hardest thing I ever did, taking over three years of intense focus and 50-hour workweeks to finish my thesis. But I discovered that fly fishing was the one past-time that helped me escape all the stress and tension. To do it well, especially at the novice stage, takes intense focus and constant learning. You need to be in the moment. You need to be immersed in nature, paying attention to the ecology, the insect life, the weather, the water levels, the flow, and even the geology of the waterways, not to mention an understanding about trout and their habits. These are the things that Mike focused on in the course, helping to take some of the mystery and luck out of the equation, making it more about the science and art of fly fishing, and teaching me a past-time that forever changed my life.

This year I was fortunate enough to get my first sabbatical. My first thought was, 'I need to figure out how to get back to New Zealand'! And here I am. One of the first things I did was contact Chris and get a membership with the club. I've always appreciated the camaraderie and generosity in the sharing of information from people within the club. In other countries, it's not easy to find out when and where to fish, but having resources like Fish & Game and this fishing club are a blessing. I hope everyone reading this appreciates what a great resource this is.

Tight lines, everyone!

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

5 th Dec	CM	Fly Tying
7 th Dec		Mid-week Trip – Dave Harris 027 201 6722
10 th Dec		Club Day Trip , Catlins – Meet at Fish & Game 7:00am
14 th Jan		Club Day Trip , meet at Fish & Game – 7am
16 th Jan		On the River, Tuesday straight after work, Coal Pit Rd
24 th Jan		Mid-week trip – Dave Harris 027 201 6722
27/28 th Jan		Fly Fishing course run by Mike Weddell from Mosgiel
30 th Jan	MM	
3-7 th Feb		Lake Alexandrina Trip*
6 th Feb	CM	Fly Tying
11 th Feb		Club Day Trip , meet at Fish & Game - 7am
25 th Feb		On the Fly Festival – Gore

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 (027 201 6722) dcharris@southnet.co.nz
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- Editor Dave Harris dcharris@southnet.co.nz
Items for publication must be submitted to the editor, prior to the 10th of the month
- Librarian Chris Cowie (027 236 9576)
- 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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