

“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, it's been pretty busy but finally I have almost a clear diary for the week. Just this Ripples to complete and then a short meeting with the Minister of Hunting & Fishing on Friday morning. The rest of the season looks pretty quiet so hopefully I will be able to get plenty of fishing done. Please weather gods give me some good weather and clear rivers.

I have managed to get in quite a bit of fishing, almost all on the Mataura River. For some reason the river is quite blue coloured from Cattle Flat down but is clear at Nokomai. This is in spite of the river being quite low. Something must have happened in the Nokomai Gorge to cause this. Maybe a slip into the river. My results have been varied with a lot of action some days to none at all on others.

One day that stands out with plenty of action was the mid-week trip. Gerda and I went up to Riversdale. The river was low but not clear. However, we spotted quite a few fish and they seemed to be quite keen to take the fly but not at all keen to come to the net. Mind you I was using #18 nymphs so the hook is not very big. I only broke one off but two didn't hook up and I dropped four during the day. Three came to the net.

I went out early on the day of the barbeque and fished not far above Gore. Only saw a couple of fish but hooked nothing. Lack of water clarity didn't help. I didn't fish at Coal Pit Road during or after the barbeque and I don't have any report from anyone else who was there.

My major expedition was to the Lodge and there is a report later in this Ripples on how we got on fishing the Upper Mataura. One thing to mention here is that there are just too many anglers up there, most of them non-residents.

We still have two Club day trips coming. The April Trip is scheduled for April 13th and the start time is 8:00am and the May Trip is scheduled for May 11th with a meeting time of 10:00am. There is also the April and May Lodge Trips for those that are keen for a weekend away. The April Trip is scheduled for April 26th and 27th but it is likely to start on the 25th as this is ANZAC day. Finally there are two mid-week trips on the calendar, 23rd April and 28th May. Make an effort to come on some of these.

Barbeque on the River by Dave

We had our annual barbeque at Coal Pit Road on the Mataura River in place of our February Meeting. Chris was in charge of the food and made a good job of cooking the steak, sausages and onions and provided salads as well as soft drinks and bread. I didn't recognise one vehicle when it came in but it turned out to be Ian, who we haven't seen for a while. There were seven members along plus the Cowie kids.

Thanks to Chris for his efforts.



Lake Alexandrina Trip by Julie

Five very enthusiastic anglers set off for the Club's trip to Lake Alexandrina early on the morning of the 11th February. All bar John had been previously and we knew the weather could be anything up at the lake. Fortunately the weather was beautiful with low winds on the way up and remained so for the entire week.

The roads were very quiet and everyone made good time and by early afternoon we were unpacked and Cole and Roger were out preparing the dingy for an early getaway Wednesday morning.

Once this was completed we enjoyed a catch-up over a cuppa and Hors d'oeuvres while we waited for Serena to arrive. Serena had purchased a second hand dingy and was very keen to baptise it at Lake Alexandrina. Once she arrived we got her dingy sorted and enjoyed a lovely dinner before an early retire to bed in preparation for the next day.

Cole, Roger and I helped Serena get sorted with her Dingy and she cruised the edges familiarising herself with the lake and her new toy. Then we three went off in the club's dingy keeping an eye on Serena. It wasn't very long and we were pulling in fish. John joined us later in the day and he too brought his kayak and went for a paddle around the lake.

We all worked collectively taking turns in the boat with Cole, or walking the shore. It was the first time the club had three boats and three rowers. John was stoked with the beauty of the lake and with the number of fish he caught. Roger said he could barely get his line in the water for John exclaiming 'Fish On' I do think its safe to say John is pretty hooked on Lake Alexandrina. He was well prepared with a lot of experimental patterns to try and many worked well. Everyone helped with catching and netting and releasing. Cole made an awesome job of putting us over the hotspots for fish. We were very impressed at the size of the fish being caught. The largest was a rainbow I landed at 66cm and 7.03lbs. The smallest catchy was just over a pound. It was excellent to know that smaller fish are coming on in the lake. Most were in the 52-62cm lengths and were beautiful big fish. John also caught a nice rainbow on his walk around the lake. Usually we were back for a late lunch and a rest/walk for the afternoon before our pre dinner drinks and debrief for the day. The Gravlax salmon and the Gravlax trout were very popular and we tried some trout eggs prepared in various ways. Some members of the team commented their favourite meal was the roast chicken and gravy (that was perfectly turned off at

5pm in absence of the cook!), followed by cream vanilla parfait.

My word the ducks loved the leftovers. Everyone agreed it was one of the best trips to Lake Alexandrina we have had. Beautiful weather and hungry fish blessed it.

It was interesting to note that using all the same gear, using the same spots, weather stable, going the same speed sometimes it was a feeding frenzy and other times nothing. We could not predict this despite us trying. Every morning we were all away by 6.30am so even fishing times were the same? Each day once our quota was reached we called it a day.



Julie with her 7lb Lake Alexandrina rainbow.

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Lake Alexandrina Trip (cont)

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We did have to be careful with the water, as it had been a long dry spell for the area and the tank was well down.

One thing we notice was at least 50 ornamental native trees have been planted and it was impressive to see people coming to water them every 2nd day. They will be beautiful when they grow bigger.

The biggest ecological change was that the lake has been lowered intentionally by 12cm. This has created a 'roaring' rapid in the stream by the wooden bridge that the grebes are unable to get up. (note: This is a protected area for the endangered crested grebe's that breed at Lake Alexandrina) so it is very concerning.

On one of our trips we found the rare freshwater snail 'Potamopyrgus antipodarum' that Lake Alexandrina is famous for. I managed to pull this up with a beech tree. I also caught a poplar tree and I can assure you that reeling it in is no easy feat on a flyline and rod.

We all had a few mishaps, and lots of stories that will forever be left at Lake Alexandrina and a lot of fun. There was a fair bit of ribbing and humour. A good few fish that broke us, or didn't make it to the dingy. But we did hook 37 fish between us which is a significantly higher number than our previous 7 or 8 trips.

I highly recommend this trip to all club members to experience a different type of fishing. Harling can be great fun. The only limiting factor is how many boats and rowers we can get each year to take more members. So be in early if you want to get on this trip.

March Club Trip by Dave

I arrived at Fish & Game a little early and found no-one there. Still no-one by 7:05 so I headed off on my own. I decided to head to Riversdale and fish the Mataura.

As it has been the last couple of times I have fished this area, the river was discoloured with a distinct blue tinge making it difficult to see into the water. I don't know where this colour is coming from but it seems to be somewhere in the Nokomai Gorge as I found it clear at Nokomai a couple of days later.

Early on there was no sign of any fish activity. I eventually spotted a couple of rises but they were single rises and no sign of the fish when I got up to where I had seen the rise. Finally, I found one that was rising and swimming just below the surface. It was clearly visible, so I offered it a parachute adams. It rose to the fly but at the last minute changed its mind and didn't take it. It then disappeared into the deeper water.

A bit further up the river I spotted two fish, line astern and about three metres apart. They were both rising well. I had two dries on, both parachute adams but one was a #16 and the other a #18. The fish rose to the #18 and looked like it had taken the fly but I could still see the fly so I didn't strike. A slightly longer cast and the #16 fly drifted nicely in the fish's feeding lane. This time it took the fly and I set the hook. I did managed to stop the fish running upstream and after a short fight it was in the net. A nice 3lb brown. I released it and went to look for the other fish that had been just upstream. Unfortunately, no sign of it.

That was my lot for the day so it was back to the car and off home relatively early.

Cover Photo by Dave

"On the Fly" Festival. Zanda in the back tying flies, Chris teaching fly tying and Gerda discussing flies with a couple of locals.

"On the Fly" Festival by Dave

As we have in previous years, we put on a fly tying display at the Gore District Council "On the Fly" Festival alongside the Mataura River on March 23rd.

Unfortunately, the tent we had used in previous years had been destroyed and the new tent that the Council provided was smaller than the old one. We didn't have room for all of us to tie flies but there was enough room for Gerda and Chris to use the new Club table and Zanda had to go in the back corner where he was tying as well as selling flies. I did manage to tie one fly using Chris's gear while he was away doing other things.

We had good interest from the public with a number taking interest in what we were doing and some even having a go at tying. There was also some interest in next year's Fly Fishing Course (even though it is 10 months away) and Chris got a couple of names of people to contact prior to the next course. Mike Weddell (who was demonstrating fly casting) mentioned he also had someone who was interested in our next course.

The Festival was well worth while in terms of the Club profile and attracting people to fly fishing and fly tying.



A young boy trying out fly tying with Chris's assistance.

Zanda and Chris showing two young boys how to tie flies while their mother looks on.



March Expedition by Dave

For the last couple of years, Cole and I have had a fishing expedition for about a week. This year we decided to only go a short distance and booked into the Club Lodge for the week.

I went shopping for supplies on the Sunday night and then headed away to the Lodge first thing Monday morning. Once there I turned the power on and unloaded all the supplies before heading away fishing.

I decided to start at Cattle Flat so headed off to an access I had fished at a couple of years ago. When I arrived there I found two Australian anglers already there and they were heading downstream which is what I was intending to do. I decided to head upstream instead. The water was still quite coloured, as I had found the previous day when on the Club trip but I spotted some fish in a back water immediately. Unfortunately they spotted me as well. I continued up the river, fishing some very likely looking ripples without any success. I hadn't gone far when I spotted two anglers ahead of me. I headed back down to the car but progress was slowed by a number of fish in a big backwater, With the colour in the water I could only see them occasionally. They weren't interested in what I offered.

Once back at the car I drove up to where I had seen the other two anglers and checked their licences. Two more Australians. One had managed to hook some small fish in a ripple while the other was trying to catch a bigger fish in a back water.

From here I headed downstream a bit and found another access. There are no access signs along here as someone associated with Federated Farmers has stolen them all including those that relate to access across public land. However using the Pocket Maps app I was able to find public access. I had not fished this section of river before and there was a lot of slow moving water with banks covered in difficult vegetation. I saw no sign of any fish, so it was back to the Lodge.

I had just messaged Cole asking where he was when he turned into the gate. We headed to the Mossburn pub for dinner that night. They seemed to have a lot of bookings and for only the second time we dined out the back.

The forecast for Tuesday wasn't great with rain in the afternoon. We decided to head to Nokomai as there are a number of short beats there and that meant we wouldn't be far from the car if it started to rain. On the way in I spotted some other anglers getting ready to head across to the river. I checked their licences and then



headed further in. When we got to the beat I wanted to fish there was already a group there, so more licence checks and on our way to find another beat. We found an unoccupied beat and headed across to the river. The river here was clear and we spotted a number of fish. I was on to a fish quite early but that was all we managed to hook up on. Once we reached the end of the beat I went back and got the car then we headed to another beat.

Cole casting to a fish on the clear Upper Mataura

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March Expedition (cont)

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We found another beat but we knew it had already been fished that day. Once again a reasonable number of fish spotted but only one came to the net.

The rain arrived Tuesday evening and it was still raining Wednesday morning. We both tied a few flies. I had been reading a Fly Life magazine the previous evening and decided to tie a fly that was described in it. Meanwhile Cole was replenishing his supply of nymphs. After lunch the rain had cleared so we headed off to a spring creek. Much to our surprise there was no-one else there. We spotted a few fish rising but not many and nothing came to the net.

Checking the river flows and rainfall on Thursday morning showed that there had been quite a bit of rain and the Mataura at Parawa was up but still very low at Fairlight. This suggested that Eyre Creek was running high. We headed up past Athol noting that the Oreti, Irthing and Eyre Creek were all dirty but the Mataura was clear at Athol. There was no-one else at the bridge so we decided to fish there. Early on we didn't have much luck but later in the day we landed a few fish. Once we reached the end of the beat it was back to the car and then on to another beat. This was a short beat but once again we spotted a number of fish. At the top of the beat there was a fish rising in some still water but I had some difficulty figuring out what it was rising to. I finally decided to try a willow grub and the fish rose to it but didn't take it. That was our lot for the day.

Friday, I decided we should head further down the river to Riversdale. Unfortunately, the river was still quite coloured here so it was back to Nokomai. On the way in I stopped to check some more licences but the anglers said they had just been checked. A bit further down the road and I found a Fish & Game field officer who had just checked two licences. These were actually two Australians I had checked on Monday morning. Once again most beats were taken but we found a beat we hadn't fished before. There were fish to be spotted but they were very spooky as they had been everywhere and we didn't get any to the net on this beat. We found a second beat but had the same results.

Saturday was our last day. Cole asked if I thought that there would be more people out with it being Saturday but I said I didn't think so. I was wrong. We headed up past Athol and once again the beat I wanted to fish was taken. We headed back down the road and I missed a beat sign and went past. By the time I had done a u-turn and got back to it there were two cars there. We finally found a beat. Initially it looked difficult and the fish were just ignoring everything we offered them. I was also having trouble with the vegetation, both the willow trees and the weeds and thistles along the sides of the river. Just before lunch we found some that were keen. We both managed three fish for the day and these were mostly good sized fish in good condition. The biggest was 5 ¼ lb. When we got back to the car there was another car parked behind mine so there was someone else fishing the beat. It was a rental car so most likely more overseas anglers.

From here it was back to the Lodge to pack up, clean the Lodge and head home.

It was a pretty good trip but there were too many other anglers on the river. I checked 13 fishing licences during the trip. Seven were Australian with only one of these being guided. He was being guided by Gavin Hurley (I had checked Gavin's licence earlier in the season), three were American, all being guided and one was Canadian. The only resident licences I found were the two guides. This is the fishery that Fish & Game have been trying to make a designated water to try and limit the non-resident angling but this has been turned down by the minister the last two years. With almost all beats being fished every day and some fished twice in a day the fish are very spooky and this is just too much activity for a fishery.



Best fish of the trip. 5¼ lb brown

Coming Events

(MM=Monthly Meeting, CM = Committee)

25 th Mar	MM	
26 th Mar	Fishing	Mid-week Trip
1 st April	CM	Fly Tying
13 th April	Fishing	<u>Club Day Trip</u> , meet at Fish & Game 8am
23 rd April	Fishing	Mid-week Trip – Dave Harris 027 201 6722
26/27 th April	Fishing	Lodge Trip (End of Season)
29 th April	MM	
6 th May	CM	Fly Tying
11 th May	Fishing	<u>Club Day Trip</u> , meet at Fish & Game 10am, to the lower Mataura

Club Contacts

- Address **Southland Fly Fishing Club, PO Box 1689, Invercargill, New Zealand**
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- President Dave Harris, 30 Baxter Street Invercargill (027 201 6722) daveharris823@gmail.com
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- Editor Dave Harris daveharris823@gmail.com
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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