

“Ripples”

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

October 2025

www.southlandflyfishingclub.org.nz



Next Club Meeting - October 28th - 7:30pm Fish & Game Office, 17 Eye Street



Southland Fly Fishing Club

President's Report by Dave

Well, the season hasn't got off to a good start and the weather is continuing to be unsuitable for fly fishing although I have seen posts on Facebook that indicate there has been some fishable water in Northern Southland but I think a fair bit of driving around is required to find it.

I did a lot of driving around on the last day of September and did find good looking water but overnight rain and snow upset some of that. However, I did get out and found some clear enough water so that was good. I took Gerda out on the 3rd October and we found clear enough water but the fish we spotted were completely uncooperative. The only one I saw move in response to my nymph moved away from it. I haven't been out since.

We held our casting day on the last Sunday of September and had five members along as well as two members of the public. The two members of the public had spoken to us at Hunting & Fishing and were both keen to learn to fly fish so hopefully we will see them on the course.

Neither the October Lodge Trip or the Club Trip on the second Sunday of October went ahead due to river conditions but hopefully we will see some improvements that will let us get out for future trips. We have a Lodge Trip scheduled for the first weekend of November. If you are keen to go on this let me know (027 201 6722) so I can plan what is needed.

Fishing Story by Zanda

Day one

We headed to the Waikaia River at 10:00am. I walked to a spot I found on Google maps that I thought looked good. Turns out the walk was not easy. I started my walk heading through bush swamps, crossing creeks and after an hour and a half found myself at the river. I had no clue on what flies to use so I chose a dry dropper rig using a royal wulff and a black and silver midge variant. The day was very disappointing to start with as I didn't see a fish for a long time then I started to fish the feed line to see if there was be anything sitting in there and sure enough I hooked into a nice 5lb brown trout. I managed to land him after fighting him for about 15 minutes. After I got him back in the water I had high hopes but sure enough nothing else took the fly.

Day Two

Day two started early, got out of bed at 4:27am made a nice hot coffee and enjoyed the views of the snow on the hills all around. At first light we headed down to the river and I decided I would try my luck on a stream that ran into the river where we were. Straight away I saw two nice trout feeding on something under the surface of the water so I thought that I would have a crack at catching them. I tried but caught something called a tree and spooked the fish so I have gave up on trying to catch them and headed up stream. After what felt like hours but in reality was 30 minutes, I saw another fish feeding under the surface so I gave him a crack and on the first pass of my fly he took my midge and I set the hook. After a good fight with him I landed it, after calming down a little bit from being so happy, I weighed it at 3lb. After taking a photo I sent him on his way. I carried on up stream with no luck at all so decided to call it at lunch time, to grab something to eat and change spots. Got to the second spot and I fished for a good 3 hours then gave up after not catching anything.

Come to 9pm, just after dark I decided to head out for a night fish. After a ten minute walk to the river, I saw a fish straight away. I cast a mouse to it but it wasn't interested. I decided to leave him alone so I walked further up stream and found a nice wee calm spot that had three nice sized fish sitting in it. I cast my mouse out the them and first cast "FISH ON". After 12min fight with him, I landed him and he weighed 3¼lb.

A good start to the season.

Cover Photo by Dave

First fish of the season. 4lb brown from the Waikaia.

SFFC Meeting and Opening Day by Julie

Mounting excitement as the 1st of October gets here. Weather wet, rivers up but who wants to miss going out on opening day?

The lead up, September 30th SFFC Meeting. Cohen, Field Officer from Fish & Game was the speaker for the night. Cohen was sharing the research being done on the health benefits of fishing. This research is being evaluated under the Tapa Wha model. This is a Māori model of health and wellness. It was developed by Mason Durie in 1984. The model portrays a house. The foundation of the house represents the land and sense of belonging; the walls represent physical, mental and emotional, family and social and spiritual health. A balance is needed for overall health. We all experience the benefits of fishing but it was educational to look at it in this framework. So I decided to apply it to opening day.

Weather forecast: rain, wind, rivers dirty and in flood, snow to low levels and low temps! At the meeting it was suggested the best thing to do on opening day was stay home with a bottle of red wine and a roaring fire and dream of better days to come.

But that was not going to cut it for me as I felt like it had been forever since being on a river bank in my happy place.

So with a maximum dose of optimism, hope that weather can change quickly, and there has to be sheltered corners of water somewhere, I rushed home to bake a bacon and egg pie for lunch and prepare my hot flask of coffee. After all opening day is opening day. Went to sleep late excitedly looking forward to being on the river once again and the adventures in store. Hmm a few hours later waking with heavy rain on the roof I delayed take off till 8am.

First stop Waituna. Bridge to the huts closed as under water. Carried on. All accesses not looking promising. No anglers to be seen. Carpark under water. Well finally here I was at water. Did not wait to put on waders, new short gumboots on I grabbed my rod and rushed down to check it out before I got fully dressed. I had to have a few casts just to satiate my addiction. First cast I caught a massive ball/mess of someone's line wrapped around my hook. Gumboots full of ice-cold water. Cleaned up my hook and felt pleased I had removed the line from the dangers of marine and bird life. Tried a few more casts but it was rough and dangerous as could not get a position with the wind on my back with the howling gale. Also, could no longer feel my feet so left and headed up river to check other waterways. Along the way I met up with a few other anglers most stayed 5-10mins and a natter before giving up. Headed up towards Mandeville perusing F & G access points on the way. The water was improving a little on the way north of Gore. An inch or two on the edges were clear. Still very dirty – well a wooly buggar might work on the edges. Snow increasing on the hills as I drove.

Communicated with Dave and he was of the same opinion heading the Lumsden route towards the Waikaia. I remained cheerful and optimistic, it was warm and dry in the car and after an hour my feet started to thaw. It was my intention to go on to Piano Flat but once at Waikaia I found a nice bit of water in McKinnel Road sheltered from the wind. Talked with a group of anglers and they were happy for me to head up above them and fish. This time I fully dressed before commencing my fishing. It was sunny and warm where I was and spent a few hours searching for trout and casting. A couple of touchers was all I got and never saw a fish of any sort. Still very dirty but clear the first 12 inches on the edges. I worked those edges well but no fish came to my delicious fly.

It was so nice to be on the riverbank again and focusing on fishing that I got totally lost to it. And time passed. I was feeling quite euphoric when I left. Who needs to catch a fish to enjoy time on a riverbank. All my cares vanished in a heartbeat. I returned to Waikaia checking out a few more access points for future reference.

(Continued on page 4)

SFFC Meeting and Opening Day (cont)

(Continued from page 3)

Arriving in Waikaia I was highly amused at two signs one on the pub saying: "Fishing is like dating catch and release till you find a keeper." The sign on the other side outside the Waikaia shop and café made me stop. It read something like "Come in and share stories with local anglers" so the brakes went on and in I went. I was feeling puckish and a long drive home. Spoke to an angler who said he had only seen one flyfishing gentleman all day, most were on spin rods. The only ones that caught a fish resorted to a live wiggly worm. I thought to myself that is what I started with when I was four years old and the idea of putting a live worm on a hook these days did not appeal in the same way. Reminiscenced of a live mayfly being put on a flyrod in Ireland. This angler also informed me that the lovely owner Jo Leask made the best sea food chowder in the world. Well, I had to try that. I pride myself on my sea food chowder being the best in the world and my three skeptical angling brothers have even acknowledged that fact. The recipe has been passed down through many generations. However, I had to concede her chowder is the best I have ever had. Full of blue cod and salmon. I do recommend a fishing stop to see Jo and try her chowder.

During the eating I met Jo's forever friend Jessica McKenzie (owner of a station and BNB on the Mataura). Two hours later I left having been shouted red wine and the most interesting stories and two new friends. What lovely women. Jo is also turning the house at the back of the shop into a BNB for anglers. Contented and happy after my lovely day I headed for home.

Driving home I was thinking about my day under the Tapa Wha model and applying this:

- Fishing and the feeling of connecting to the land and environment.
- Spiritual, connection of something bigger than self and the feel-good factor of being on the riverbank.
- Emotional and wellbeing and what's to come for the season. Stuff dreams are made of.
- Physical - what better way to forget your aches and pains as you age and get a little exercise. Be it sunshine, rain or gale-force winds.
- The joy of a relaxing day and bringing new stories and adventures home to family and friends.
- The connectiveness of making two new friends.

No fish but an awesome adventure for opening day.

Competitions by Gerda

Fly Tying Competition

Final night of the Fly Tying Competition was at the September Meeting. Just two flies entered and Gerda won the vote as well as the Hunting & Fishing gift card.

Fishing Competition

The October Meeting sees the first month of the Fishing Competition. You were given seven cards when you paid your subs. Fill the first of these in with your biggest fish for the month and bring it along to the meeting (or get it to Dave, Chris or Gerda before the meeting) to go in the draw for a Hunting & Fishing gift card.



Gerda's winning fly

Opening Day by Dave

I have had some great opening days but this year the weather was definitely against us. After checking river levels on the computer, my wife suggested that I go for a drive and have a look the day before to see where I should go the next day. I didn't find much that was very good but a few spots that at least looked fishable. The Waikaia looked best even though I didn't go up past the Block Road bridge. Its tributaries were not too bad either. Then came Tuesday nights weather with wind, rain and a quick check before leaving showed the Waikaia had risen significantly at Waikaia. This made the likelihood of finding some clear water remote. In spite of this Isaac joined me and we set off to see what we could find.

The first place we checked was the Tomogalak Stream but it wasn't great. From here we headed up the Waikaia. First thing we noticed is that there were a lot of people out but lower down the river wasn't suitable for fly fishing. However, we checked it out at Piano Flat and it looked pretty good. While talking to a spin fisher we watched a trout following his spinner in, but not taking it. He said he was moving on so we decided this was the place to start. The weather was a bit cold and there wasn't much sun as well as there being a lot of sleet lying around.

We got set up and away we went. We started by having a few casts so the fly drifted across a drop off. No joy here so we headed downstream looking out for fish. We hadn't spotted anything by the time we reached a point where vegetation stopped our progress. We headed slowly back up, casting to a couple of sticks that looked like fish but weren't. We got up beside an island in the river and I suggested we wade out to the island and see what was on the other side. It was a pretty easy wade out to the island. Isaac went around the top of the island while I went down the side we had approached from to fish up the other side. I soon spotted a dark shape that looked to be moving. A couple of casts and I was hooked up. Fortunately, the fish didn't try and run downstream as there was no way I could go far down without swimming. It came in quite quickly and I soon had it in the net although it tried to swim out only to finish up on the bank. A nice 4lb brown. Isaac went down the bank below the island but didn't see anything. I checked out a drop off at the top of the island but found nothing so went up that side of the river as far as I could. I was wet wading and to go upstream required a lot wading so I soon decided this was not a great idea.

Back across to the original side of the river and a close look on the way back to the car. I soon spotted a fish and Isaac moved up to cast to it but it saw him and was soon gone. The next fish we spotted waited around for Isaac to have a few casts to it. It wasn't interested in his nymph so I moved up to try my luck. It obviously saw me and was gone. We only saw one more fish on the way back up but it was already on its way. Back to the car for lunch.

From here we decided to head elsewhere and should have headed further up the river but I didn't think we would find suitable water. A check on the computer when I got home showed this not to be the case.

We headed back to the Tomogalak Stream, going to the Biggar Road bridge. It was clear there had already been someone here and the stream was marginal. We headed about one kilometre down stream and walked back up. No fish were spotted and by the time we got back to the bridge we had had enough. After crossing the fence onto the bridge I did spot a fish immediately above the bridge. It was really hard to see but saw me and was gone. Time to head home.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions are now due. \$30 for adult members, \$10 for juniors and \$40 for family. Please pay into our bank account ANZ #06-0925-0947474-00. Payee is Southland Fly Fishing Club Inc. Use initial & surname as reference.

Under the new rules for incorporated societies you need to give approval to become a member. When paying your subscription please fill in the application for membership form that is on the main page of the web site and send it to Chris. You will only have to fill it in this year.

November Lodge Trip by Dave

We are holding our November Lodge Trip on the 1st and 2nd of November. Plan is to head up Friday night after tea and fish the high country rivers Saturday and Sunday before cleaning up and heading home Sunday evening.

We will go to the Mossburn Pub for Saturday tea. If you are keen on going let me know (027 201 6722) so I can sort out cars and food for breakfasts and lunches.

Rivers that we are likely to fish are the Von, Upukerora, Whitestone and Eglinton. All of these open on November 1st and all should have rainbows as well as browns. It will need to be an early start on Saturday as these rivers will be popular on opening day.

Lake Alexandrina Trip by Julie

The SCAC Outlet hut has been booked from Thursday 5th Feb to Tuesday 10th Feb. The SCAC have done up the hut this year and now it has both a microwave and slow cooker available. They are trying to hold the price for members.

This year there is an upfront payment of \$75 non refundable unless exceptional circumstances as it has to be paid. Will be first in first serve.

We have agreed to take more as if we run out of room in the cabin some have agreed to sleep in their car. I will be out of the country most of Dec/Jan so that's why it's being organised so early.

If you are keen to go let Julie know now. juliecook@actrix.co.nz She will advise on how to pay the deposit.

Zanda's Photos.



Zanda's opening trip



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

28 th Oct	MM	
1 st Nov		High Country Opening (Saturday)
1/2 nd Nov	Fishing	Club Trip [Weekend at the Lodge] - High Country Opening
5 th Nov	CM	Fly Tying
10 th Nov	Fishing	<u>Club Day Trip</u> meet at Fish & Game – 7am
20 th Nov	Fishing	Mid-week trip - Dave Harris 027 201 6722
26 th Nov	MM	
3 rd Dec	CM	Fly Tying
8 th Dec	Fishing	<u>Club Trip</u> , Catlins – Meet at Fish & Game 7:00am

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) daveharris823@gmail.com
- Secretary Chris McDonald, 334 Racecourse Road, Invercargill (03 217 3733) mcdonald.ccnd@kinect.co.nz
- Vice-President Gerda Johnstone, (022 166 1149) gerda.johnstone10@gmail.com
- 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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