



NZFFA August 2021 Newsletter

Welcome to Your Newsletter

STOP PRESS - COVID OUTBREAK

We all know by now the whole country will remain at level 4 till at least 25th August. Even then it will be highly unlikely Auckland will see any reduction in levels for some time to come.

Please observe all the correct protocols and distancing requirements. Stay safe - you can't go fishing when you're ill....

Application of Wastewater Onto Land via Irrigation

Managed appropriately the environmental consequences can be minimal. There are a number of economic pressures that can lead to environmental harm - insufficient land area, inappropriate soil types, the costs of an adequate irrigation infrastructure, monitoring, and prompt remedial action(s). Excessive application rates of wastewater and N loading will inevitably result in nitrate leaching to the subsurface aquifer. Effective monitoring and enforcement by Ecan is essential.

While NZFFA's primary concern about diffuse nitrate contamination of groundwater relates to eutrophication and direct ecotoxic effects on macroinvertebrates, vulnerable life stages of amphibians and fish in groundwater fed lowland springs and rivers, Central and Regional Government cannot avoid their accountability to public health.

[Nitrate contamination in drinking water and adverse birth outcomes: emerging evidence is concerning for NZ – Public Health Expert,](#)

[University of Otago, New Zealand \(click to follow link\)](#)

The NZFFA is currently waiting on or working through replies to several recent LGOIMA requests relating to Ecan consents allowing the application of processing waste from meat plants, dairy factories, and sewage wastewater onto land.

Of concern is the vulnerable class of the land involved, the timing of the applications, the high N loadings, and the (liberal) limits of nitrate pollution of groundwater allowed under these consents.

It seems the (historic) NZ maximum allowable value MAV of 11.3 mg/L NO₃-N is the primary focus of these consents.

The nuisance of odours is another focus of these consents.

When monitoring finds the MAV is exceeded, the consent holder must supply alternative drinking water to downslope owners of polluted wells.

There is no apparent consideration/action to mitigate the risks to aquatic ecosystems.

Applying wastewater to light stony Canterbury soils carries a high risk of contaminating shallow groundwater with E. Coli as well as nitrate.

Limited monitoring by Ecan confirms deteriorating water quality in many wells in their region due to irrigation and intensive farming.

Land application of wastewater appears to be a further source of this pollution.

The University of Otago blog above adds pressure on the NZ Government to consider lowering NZ's MAV for nitrate in our freshwater.

This can only help aquatic ecosystems.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Rangitata Huts Water Supply

Routine sampling has identified increased levels of nitrate in the Rangitata Huts Water Supply.

The nitrate levels detected are above the MAV (maximum acceptable value) within the Drinking Water Standards NZ.

Elevated nitrate levels in drinking water is a risk to bottle feed infants and the elderly.

There will be a temporary tank by the notice board at the entrance end of the settlement with safe drinking water available for hut holder's use, for drinking.

Timaru District Council recommends consumers use the alternative water for drinking especially the high risk infants and elderly population.

Timaru District Council will continue to monitor nitrate levels and update consumers.

If you have any concerns please phone the Timaru District Council, Property Department on 687 7200

NZFFA Note: -

The above copy of the Timaru District Council's letter to the Rangitata Huts community was brought to the Greenpeace water testing day at Temuka.

This is the first time NZFFA is aware of a community water supply exceeding the MAV for nitrate, 11.3 mg/L NO₃-N.

Good for Timaru District Council.

Ecan's generic response for private well owners in Canterbury is to advise the owner that the well exceeds the MAV and leaves the well owner to their own devices.

Constitutional Change in the Wind

The Executive are working on some changes to the NZFFA Constitution to bring it into the 21st Century. This includes amendments to more modern banking practices and, as per June's AGM, exploring obtaining Charitable status.

Any Constitutional change will have to be put forward to a Special General Meeting which will be called for that purpose. Individuals and Clubs will receive at least one calendar month's notice.

New documentary shines a light on dairy farming in New Zealand

Interesting RNZ article published [here](#)

A new six-part documentary investigates the impact and future of the dairy farming boom in Aotearoa.

The Fallacy of Fencing Rivers

Several years ago, Tony Orman talked to Wairarapa conservationist and trout fisherman the late Bill Benfield who maintained riparian strips failed to deal with the big problem. We reproduce the article, still very relevant today.

A Wairarapa conservationist Bill Benfield has questioned the value of fencing riparian strips along rivers and streams.

"The fad of fencing rivers has been a 'knee jerk' response to Fish and Games' accusations of "dirty dairying," he said.

Bill Benfield said the policy of riparian strips was well intentioned but failed to fully address the problem of nitrate run-off and leaching.

"Logically the problem is one of the total catchment, i.e. watershed management, not just a five or ten metre strips beside streams," he said.

Bill Benfield said there other factors that could be damaging to river and stream ecology of which after all, trout were part of.

One was the widespread use of damaging chemicals such as diazinon, DDT's replacement, for combating grass grub. It was ratted as "a clear threat to aquatic ecosystems." Never mentioned by Fish and Game was the silt and debris-laden run-off from clear-felled commercial radiata plantations.

"Fencing off streams was more a public relations reaction, to Fish and Game's single-focus "dirty dairy" campaign. It is a text book example of a Clayton's solution - how to maintain intensive agriculture and its serious degradation of rivers while avoiding the causes. As an added public sweetener, the fenced off river margins were planted with natives. Fish and Game naively jumped on the band wagon."

Bill Benfield said in the end, the Fish and Game "dirty dairying" campaign did nothing to stop the huge expansion of dairying, particularly in low rainfall regions like Canterbury and the MacKenzie Basin.

Fish and Game had unfairly ignored other major polluters such as urban centres discharging partially treated sewerage and untreated storm water into rivers.

Many farmers felt they had been solely picked upon when urban discharges were ignored by Fish and Game. In some cases, farmers had consequently refused anglers permission for access.

"But then you've got no access through the hedge of blackberry, willows and other vegetation," he added with a wry smile.

From an anglers' viewpoint, riparian strips quickly became overgrown with weeds like blackberry, broom, gorse and even the poisonous tutu.

"The river becomes inaccessible for trout fishing while doing nothing to stop most pollution from entering the waterways," he said.

What was needed is a more focused system of river management.

There was certainly a case that where there is no intensive dairying, river banks can be managed in a natural unfenced condition.

"Stock, like sheep, goats and horses are not a major problem with minimal impact on banks and well within the healthy life of the river, with its cycles of high and low flows. Cattle can be a different issue; it is an issue of density and a matter of finding a reasonable level at which agriculture can co-exist with the river," said Bill Benfield.

Stock, like sheep, goats and horses are not a major problem with minimal impact on banks and well within the healthy life of the river, with its cycles of high and low flows. Cattle can be a different issue; it is an issue of density and a matter of finding a reasonable level at which agriculture can co-exist with the river.

Where cattle densities were high and stock received supplementary feed, they should be excluded from the river. If mixed stock are grazed, i.e. sheep and cattle, then the "selecta-fence" can be the answer – two top wires to stop cattle and no bottom wires to let sheep through.

"As an example of corporate posturing, fencing rivers has been a stunning success. As a solution it has been a failure. "

Footnote: "Water – Quality and Ownership" a book by Bill Benfield published by Tross Publishing, featured riparian strips.

Bill Benfield - "fencing rivers - a failed fad."

Tautuku Fishing Club, Dunedin

"round table" recreational fishing discussion with National Party Fisheries Spokesperson, Tim van de Molen MP for Waikato and National Party Finance & Transport Spokesman, Michael Woodhouse list MP of Dunedin. Discussions covered South East Coast Marine Protected Areas, Blue Cod Strategy, FishMainland, Nitrate testing of our drinking water, Fish & Game and Tindale Marine Research Charitable Trust. L to R. Mark Fraser, Rob Soulsby, Tim van de Molen, Brett Bensemman, Michael Woodhouse, Ian Gunion, Dave Henderson, Allen Hurrell & Eric Boock. Commercial representative Kate Hesson taking the photo also gave valuable input to the fisheries discussion over a 'blue cod' lunch today, Tuesday 17th August 2021.

Environmental Collapse Under A Cocktail Of Chemicals?

Opinion by Tony Orman

Around Marlborough there's some disturbing signs of an ailing environment. Only a few years ago, I would frequently notice kingfishers sitting on fences and power lines. Today I see none.

In the garden, the native orange-backed lady birds that prey on aphids are now rarely seen. While

frequenting river and stream banks while trout fishing I no longer hear or see frogs. As a teenager in the 1950s, frogs croaked by every stream or marshy hollow and catching tadpoles was a major pursuit for youngsters.

I recall evening starling flights of years ago. The spectacular whirling starling flights of yesteryear have gone, replaced by just a few individual birds. In trout rivers during the twilight, I recall dozens of juvenile eels in the shallows. Today they have gone. Evening mayfly hatches on the river are almost non-existent. There's a world-wide decline in bee numbers including New Zealand.

Last summer fishing the upper Wairau River, when in other years there was the chirping of bush robins and the song of cicadas, there was silence. In the high country when hunting, a kill of a deer or pig was the prelude to dozens of buzzing blow-flies. Now there are just one or two.

Nearer home, moths in dozens no longer cluster around street lights or lighted house windows. There's a big, big decline in insects banging into and being squashed on car windscreens in country areas. Are these apparent declines in numbers of wild creatures symptomatic of an ailing and declining ecosystem?

Is poisoning the land a greater threat to the environment than global warming was the question recently posed by the UK's "Guardian" noted columnist George Monbiot.

Monibot, a 54 year old British writer and author well known for his "environmental and political activism" (Wikipedia) does not dismiss global warming. Indeed Monibot ranks it as vitally important but in 3rd place after commercial fishing and the impact of agrichemicals on the insect life of the planet.

"It is simply that I have come to realise that two other issues have such huge and immediate impact that they push this even great predicament into third place. One is industrial fishing -- now causing systemic collapse. The other is the erasure of non-human life from the land. The scale and speed of environmental collapse is beyond imagination," added Monibot.

Just a week ago, a report said a new scientific study has found "dramatic" and "alarming" declines in insect populations in areas in Germany, which university researchers say could have far-reaching consequences for the world's crop production and natural ecosystems.

What of New Zealand? Are we dowsing an environment with an unprecedented mixture of chemicals? Household effluent contains bleaches and detergents that did not exist forty years ago. Are we dumping upon the environment via urban waste-water systems and widespread spraying of the country-side with agri-chemicals and insecticides and pesticides, a "cocktail of chemicals" of unprecedented volume and variety?

An indictment of the ignorant short-sighted lack of respect for the environment is that many urban areas still discharge sewage into waterways, either regularly or in high rainfall times.

Wairarapa conservationist the late Bill Benfield and author of two startling books “The Third Wave” and “At War with Nature”, says understandably farming practices have sought greater efficiencies and production. “Greater use has been made of agrichemicals, including insecticides, herbicides and fungicides. Among the insecticides is the DDT substitute diazinon which is aerially sprayed on the land for grass grub. Although banned in the EU, its use is un-restricted in New Zealand.”

Diazinon is “lethal to aquatic life.”

In May 2012 dead mallard ducks were found on a Landcorp farm at Cape Foulwind, West Coast, after 1500 hectares were sprayed with diazinon. An autopsy found the ducks to be poisoned by the organophosphate.

Then there is 1080. “Ecosystem poisons, such as the metabolic poison 1080 are aerially dropped on wilderness public lands” says Bill Benfield.

What’s the scientific verdict? Unfortunately the integrity of science has been undermined by a system of commissioned, paid science - in short money motivation he says. Some scientists have spoken out.

“The fury that descends on any scientist who steps out of line will ensure that their career and reputation will be in tatters. Few do,” says Bill Benfield.

George Monbiot in his recent column, described how in the distorted funding of science there is no end of money for finding out how to kill insects, but almost none for finding out the consequences.

In New Zealand, says Bill Benfield, eco-piety is expressed by riding a bicycle or driving hybrid cars, perhaps shopping at organic farmers markets yet the same people may campaign for even more chemical poisoning of “pests” and the fast disappearing invertebrates and bird life of the wilderness.

If Monbiot is correct, the cocktail of chemicals may also be in the long run, to the detriment of human survival.

Insect hatches by trout streams are only a shadow of yesteryear.

Postings From the Website

Some of our more recent posts from the website (see

<https://nzffa.com>)

Nitrate Testing Three Years On:

Ecologist agree that ecosystem health begins to become affected by direct nitrate toxicity from 0.6 to 1.0 mg/L NO₃-N There are no precise limits due to a lack of studies...

Read more...

Spectators Never Win in Political Decision-making

Opinion by Charles Baycroft There are two ways to regard government: - 1. "The Government", which is what most people talk about when often saying "The Government Should or Should not ———"...

Read more...

Time to Repair Damage Done to Nature

Abridged from "Newsroom" The time for exploiting nature is over and we need to focus on putting things right, writes Rod Oram in a recent "Newsroom" column. He had just...

Read more...

Kahawai and Estuary Trout Love Whitebait

by Tony Orman Whitebait in couple of months, will be coming into river mouths and running up river to spawn. Predatory fish such as kahawai often home in on the...

Read more...

A Tip for Late Winter/Spring Trout

by "Matuka" I always look sideways at fly fishers who say "I don't care if I catch any fish or not, it's just nice to get out there." Sure...

Read more...

E-Mail to ECan Councillors

Dear Councillors Please find the link below to our latest press release highlighting that Canterbury nitrate pollution has extended beyond environmental pollution to potentially threatening human health

Read more...

Canterbury's Ticking Time-bomb Over Water Nitrate Levels

New Zealand Federation Of Freshwater Anglers (Inc.) Press release Canterbury's Ticking Time-bomb Over Water Nitrate Levels A trout and salmon angling advocacy group has issued a stern warning over Canterbury's...

Read more...

The Canterbury Regional Council's (Ecan's) Annual Goundwater Quality Survey 2020.

Groundwater quality survey released | Environment Canterbury (ecan.govt.nz) The 2011 – 2020 ten year trends in Canterbury's groundwater quality, released by Ecan in July 2021, show no evidence that Ecan...

Read more...

Why Ecan's approach to freshwater management is doomed to fail

At the recent Braid Conference at Lincoln University, a retired hydrologist of 60 years' experience recently summed up the reason why Ecan is unable to manage Canterbury's freshwater; It is...

Read more...

New Zealand Federation of Freshwater Anglers (NZFFA) Nitrate Testing Two Years On:

August 2019 to July 2021 Background to the testing Battle lines drawn over Canterbury's nitrates (msn.com) Having previously been asked to help Dr Mike Joy obtain water samples from private...

Read more...

The Federation's Executive:

President: Peter Trolove (Rakaia)

Treasurer: David Haynes (Nelson)

Secretary: David Haynes (Nelson)

Committee:

Steve Gerard (Central South Island), Andi Cockroft (Wellington), Larry Burke (NZ Salmon Anglers), Zane Mirfin (Nelson), Brett Bensemann (Otago), Casey Cravens (Otago), Colin Taylor (Nelson), Grant Henderson (Auckland), Rex Gibson (Canterbury)

Life Members, Tony Orman, (Marlborough), Sandy Bull (Gisborne), Ian Rodger (Auckland) and Ken Sims (Manawatu) are automatically on the committee

Co-opted: Alan Rennie (North Canterbury)

Disclaimer

The opinion pieces and submitted articles are provided for your interest and information. They do not necessarily represent the views of all of the Executive members but are seen as vital to promote active debate around the issues that fit the aims and objectives of the Federation.

If you have not already done so feel free to comment on any of the articles on our website. The discussions always open up many valid points.

Please feel free to circulate this newsletter around club members and friends.

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