



## NZFFA December 2023 Newsletter

{name} - Welcome to Your Newsletter

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**From all at NZFFA, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy Prosperous New Year.**



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### ***A fishing poem from the US written by Mike Sepelak***

'Twas the day before Christmas and down on the Haw  
Not a fish was arisin', the weather was raw.  
The water was frigid and brisk was the air,  
Too chilly for fishin', but I didn't care.  
The browns were all nestled down deep in their pools  
While rainbows and brookies were nobody's fools.

And I in my waders and old fishing cap,  
As usual, just couldn't cast worth a crap.  
When further upstream there arose such a crash,  
I started, and slipped, and sat down with a splash.  
My glasses went this way, my rod, it went that.  
You know you're in deep when you've floated your hat.

The gleam of the sun on the river around  
Was lovely, but hell, I was going to drown!  
When what to my wondering eyes should appear,  
But a funky old kayak. (The end must be near.)  
With a little old paddler, too fat for the boat,  
Who was trying his best just to keep it afloat.  
Through the rapids he teetered, bounced off every big rock.  
The dude's in big trouble, I thought with a shock.  
But as he arrived at my favourite hole  
He snapped it in place with a neat barrel roll  
And glided in softly, as smooth as can be.  
No fish would be spooked, except maybe me.

And then in a twinkling he popped out of his craft  
Like a cork from a bottle, I shouldn't have laughed.  
He reached back inside and he slowly withdrew  
A lovely old 4wt of shiny bamboo.  
He was dressed all in Gore-Tex and looked straight from the pages  
Of catalogs like Orvis', Hardy's and Sage's.  
A vest full of goodies encircled his frame  
With gadgets and zingers, too many to name.  
He spoke not a word but went straight to his fun,  
Throwing laser-like casts, seeming straight from a gun.  
His roll casts were graceful, his loops were so tight.  
Presentations were flawless, each drift was just right.  
He threw pheasants and hare's ears and woolies and strymphs,  
Hoppers with droppers of copper john nymphs.  
He had all of fly fishing's mysteries debunked,  
But darned if old Santa Claus didn't get skunked.  
I felt sort of bad for the jolly old elf.  
But why fish the Haw, I was asking myself.  
He could have fished Battenkill, Madison, Snake.  
It seemed that the Haw was a foolish mistake.  
I needn't have worried, I had nothing to dread,  
For he gave me a wink and here's what he said.  
"We all should remember, and here's what I'm wishin',

That it's not about fish, but it's all about fishin'."  
He sprang to his 'yak, to the rocks gave a push,  
And shot down the stream with a splash and a woosh.  
But I heard him exclaim as he drifted from sight  
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all keep lines tight."

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## **As always, We Still Desperately Need Input**

You may have noticed the paucity of articles of recent times, and we do struggle at times to obtain sufficient input to make a Newsletter worthwhile.

Hopefully, you can help us with our quest by providing material.

It can be humorous anecdotes, factual articles in the news or simple tips.

please send any contributions to [newsletter@nzffa.com](mailto:newsletter@nzffa.com)

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## **Trout Flies- Tie or Buy?**

**By Al Simpson**

**(abridged)**

Within the sport of fly fishing, one may pursue a number of avenues beyond the fishing itself. One may choose to build rods, explore the vast fly-fishing literature, or travel the world in search of streams and different fishing cultures. But the most commonly pursued avenue is the tying of flies.

After dropping a hundred dollars at a local fly shop for a handful of flies, many anglers think that tying their own flies will save some money. Unfortunately, that is not the case. There is a significant start-up cost, and always new things to try. As author John Gierach put it "And of course more often than not, trying out new and different patterns meant buying new hooks, materials, tools, and books, or, later, instructional videotapes, all of which kept the day when I'd start saving money by tying my own flies perpetually out in front of me like a carrot on a stick".

## Art Form?

But there are good reasons to tie our own flies. Some take fly tying to an art-form, producing flies truly worthy of framing and mounting on a wall. But lacking both the skill and patience to do so, I tie my flies to fish 'em. And I believe that doing so has made me a more observant, better angler.

There is nothing like a frustrating day of fishing, filled with refusals by fussy trout, to cause one to critically reassess everything from the presentation to fly selection. If the analysis leads one to think it's the fly, then one needs to either buy or tie some different flies. I think that tying allows me to tweak refused flies more readily than searching for alternatives in the fly-bins of the nearest fly

## Go-to Flies

I try to answer these questions by tying a chosen pattern with variations of some of the characteristics noted above. Then I fish them rigorously, watch their behaviour in or on the water, and of course, note the trout's receptiveness. Eventually, I settle on a pattern, which becomes a "go-to fly", until the trout seem to be ignoring it. Then the whole process begins again.

Every tier of flies goes through this process, which results in a tier's unique box of "go-to flies". Usually they are not unique enough to carry a tier's name, but they are stream-tested, and fished with confidence. There is also the pleasure of landing a fish with one's own creation.

For me, tying flies is a nice way to pass some time in the evening, especially when getting ready for a day of fishing. But more importantly, it causes me to be critical of my fly fishing, which in turn helps me become a better fly-fisher.

If still buying flies, but wishing to advance your game, try tying your own flies. It is a rewarding aspect of fly fishing.

**Footnote:** Simpson Fly Fishing is a US website dedicated to the sport of fly fishing for trout. It contains monthly articles, hundreds of photos, several instructional videos, equipment and book reviews. Hook into it!

Master fly tier the late John Morton's "Little Annie", an intricate 'art form' creation of the dragon fly nymph. Ideal for lakes? But flies don't have to be complex to catch trout. Often simple flies e.g. Hare and Copper nymph, are very good.



## **Fishing Words of Wisdom**

### **Fish IQ**

"A trout's brain is very small. It is sometimes said that dry fly fishermen pit their brains against those of the trout" No one has ever levelled a bigger insult at us."

Dermot Wilson "Fishing the Dry Fly" 1970

### **The Quest**

"The charm of fishing is that it is the pursuit of something that is elusive but attainable, a perpetual series of occasions for hope."

John Buchan (1875-1940)

### **Thoughtful**

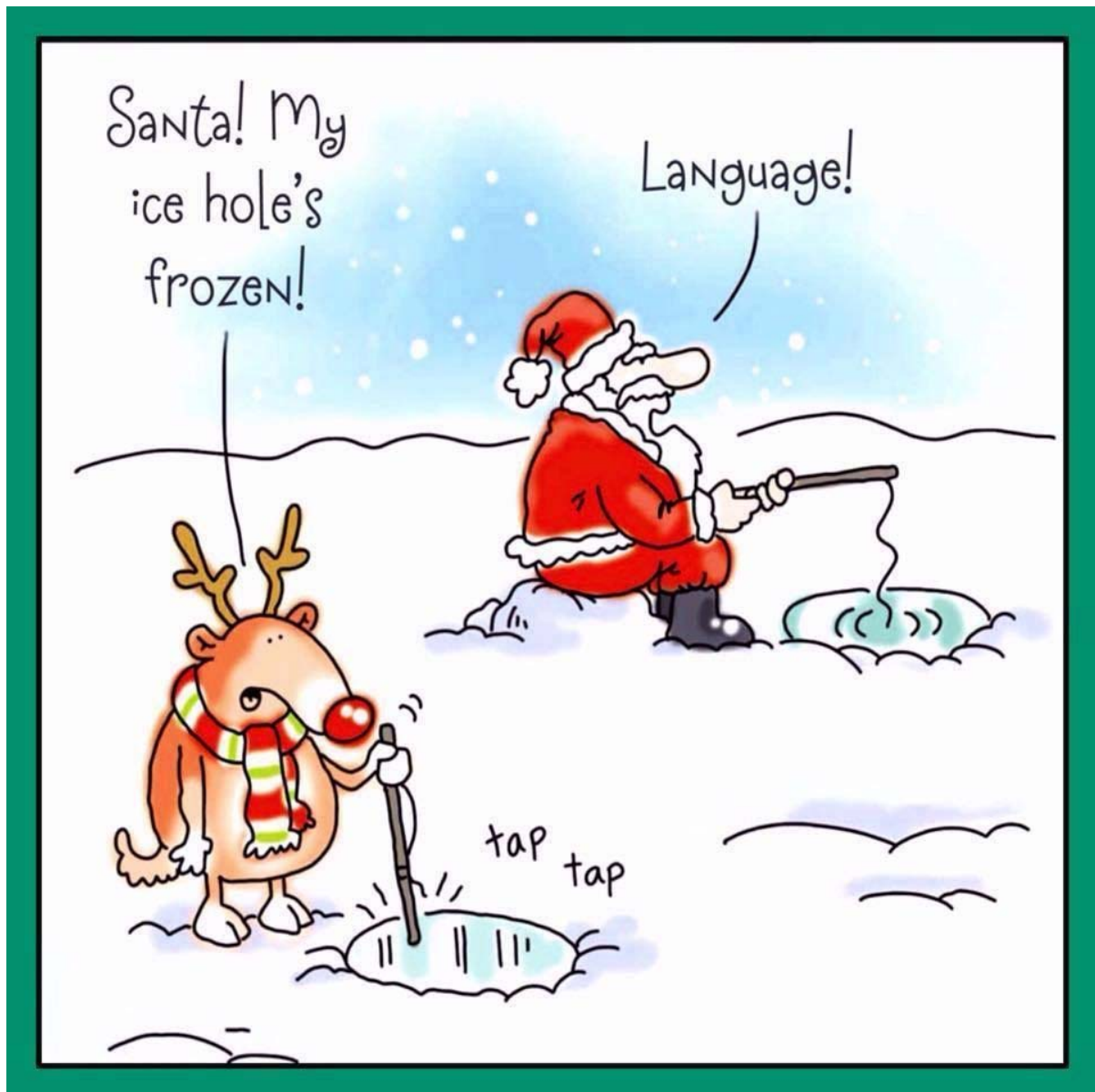
"I still don't know why I fish or why other men fish except that we like it and it makes us think and feel."

Roderick Haig-brown "A River Never Sleeps"

### **Just the Berries**

“We may say off angling as Dr Boteler said of strawberries “Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless Good never did make a more calm, quiet, innocent recreation than angling.”

Izaak Walton “The Complete Angler” 1653



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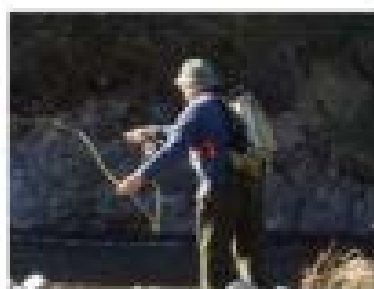
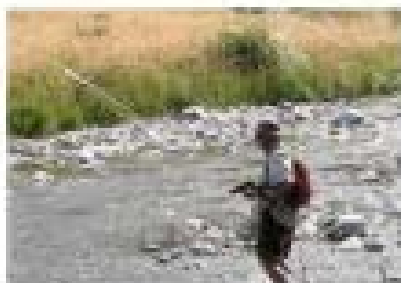
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## **Doug Graham Had It Wrong – Anyone Can Love a River**

### ***Opinion***

***by Tony Orman***

Former National government Treaty Minister in the 1990s Doug Graham once said that “Maori had spiritual feelings for lakes and mountains and rivers that Pakeha people neither shared nor understood.”

I would be surprised if Doug Graham had much to do with the outdoors and particularly with trout or salmon fishing and just going with the flow out there with the river. But those “spiritual feelings” he attributes exclusively to Maori are wrong and arguably racist.



***Doug Graham - former Treaty minister***

Besides what exactly is a Maori? There are no full blooded Maoris in 2023 according to most although I understand there may be a very few. But many of those involved in Maori advocacy have a minority of Maori ethnicity. It has been said Sir Tipene (Stephen) O'Regan for example is 1/16th Maori. So when Doug Graham talks of Maori's "spiritual feelings for lakes, mountains and rivers" is he saying that Tipene O'Regan's 15/16th European heritage has no emotional attachment to lakes, mountains and rivers, but the 1/16th Maori heritage has?

When I go trout fishing, I don't have to catch a trout to have a great day on the river. I can sit there beside the river and just mentally merge with the current flow, the mountains and the fresh air. Yet I have no Maori bloodlines.

**"Maori" friends**

And I have closely associated with some New Zealanders with strong Maori heritage. The late Ted Bason, life member of the Nelson-Marlborough Fish and Game, was a very close friend and confidant, a man I deeply respected and trusted totally. He was of strong Maori lineage. We fished together. I have had other friends of storing Maori bloodlines in rugby days and on other trout fishing and deerstalking trips.

"Spiritual feelings" to do with rivers, mountains and lakes can be felt by anyone, regardless of ethnic background.

At the time, noted historian Michael King rightly challenged Treaty Minister Doug Graham's racial claim and would have none of the racial exclusivity to the felt emotion and renewal and in fact laid claim to the emergence of an analogous Pakeha spirituality.

"Such a feeling among Pakeha people is now widely shared and as our Pakeha culture puts down even deeper roots into the soil of this country and as those roots become more hallowed by the passage of time, those feelings will become more intense."

### **Pioneer Emotions**

But then did the first European pioneers have that spiritual appreciation of lakes, mountains and rivers? Perhaps it never had to "emerge" as Michael King suggested because it already was there among the first and subsequent waves of English settlers arriving in New Zealand?

After all, the European pioneers must have had strong attachment to fishing rivers for almost immediately they set about releasing trout into rivers, streams and lakes and instilling into new laws, in line with the egalitarian society they wished to set up in the new colony, the right of all regardless of wealth or ethnic background, to go fishing.

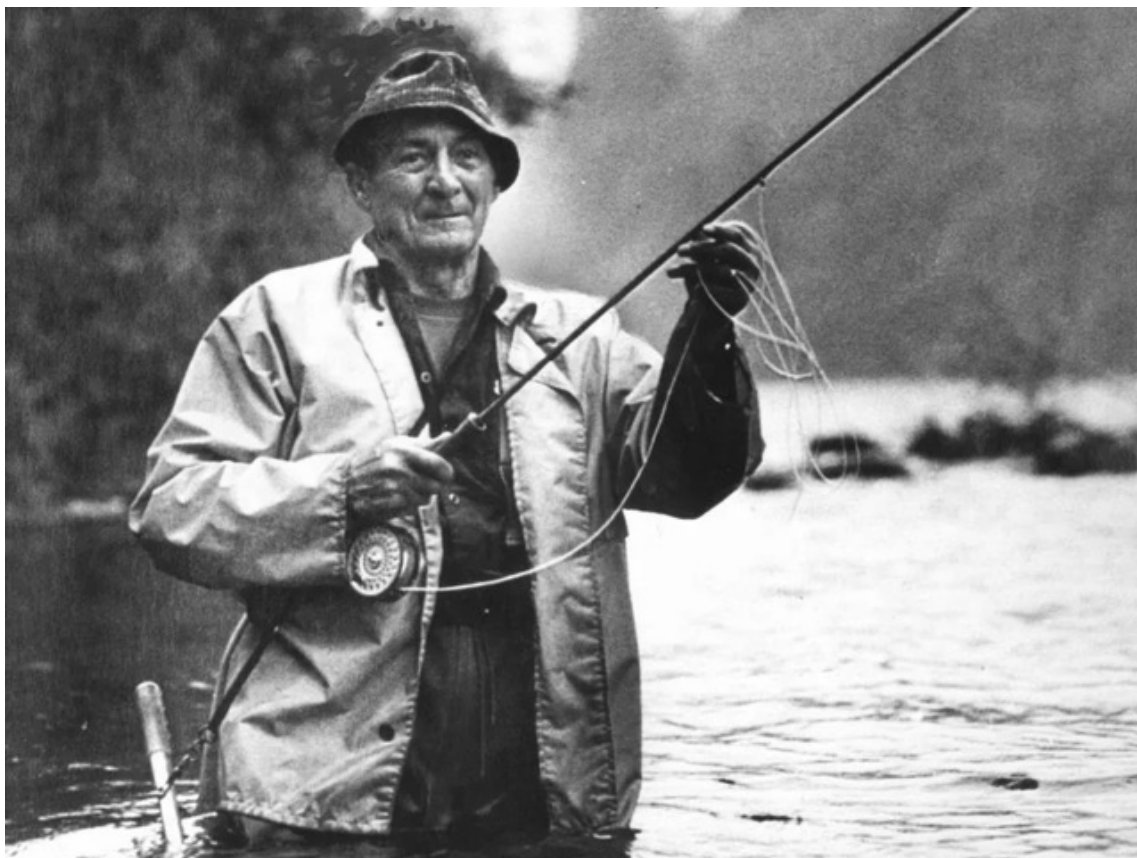
Thus both the Fisheries and Wildlife Acts prohibited the selling of fishing, hunting or shooting rights. In doing so, the pioneers had shed the feudal system of the Home country where the right to catch a trout or salmon or stalk a deer, was by dint of access fees, the preserve of the wealthy upper class.

### **"A River Never Sleeps"**

One trout fishing writer whose prose captured the feelings of being as one with a river was Roderick Haig-Brown. Few men know rivers so intimately and fondly as did Roderick Haig-Brown. No one, before or after 17th century author of "The Compleat Angler" Izaak Walton, has written of these long and deep-running friendships more lyrically, more eloquently, than Haig-Brown in his wonderful book, "A River Never Sleeps."

And why not recollect Roderick Haig-Brown's expression of that spiritual attachment to rivers, that anyone may experience and develop?

Roderick Haig-Brown and Englishman by birth who emigrated to Canada wrote "A river is water in its loveliest form; rivers have life and sound and movement and infinity of variation, rivers are veins of the earth through which the life blood returns to the heart.



**Roderick Haig-Brown - *"rivers are veins of the earth through which the life blood returns to the heart."***

### **Love a River**

"One may love a river as soon as one sets eyes upon it; it may have certain features that fit instantly with one's conception of beauty, or it may recall the qualities of some other river, well known and deeply loved. One may feel in the same way an instant affinity for a man or a woman and know that here is pleasure and warmth and the foundation of deep friendship. In either case the full riches of the discovery are not immediately released—they cannot be; only knowledge and close experience can release them. Rivers, I suppose, are not at all like human beings, but it is still possible to make apt comparisons; and this is one: understanding, whether instinctive and immediate or developing naturally through time or grown by conscious effort, is a necessary preliminary to love."

### **Inevitable Love**

"Understanding of another human being can never be complete, but as it grows toward completeness, it becomes love almost inevitably. One cannot know intimately all the ways and movements of a river without growing into love of it. And there is no exhaustion to the growth of love through knowledge, whether the love be for a person or a river, because the knowledge can never become complete. One can come to feel in time that the whole is within one's compass, not yet wholly and intimately known, but there for the knowing, within the last little move of reaching; but there will always be something ahead, something more to know."

His favourite two rivers were the Campbell and the Nimpkish both on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. But the Campbell was his favourite.

"The Campbell is the simpler river of the two, easier to know and understand for all those reasons. Nimpkish is more wonderful, more impressive, more beautiful; but Campbell – and not simply because I live within sight and sound of her – is the better of the two to love."

**Footnote:** Tony Orman has been a trout fisherman for 76 years

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# Postings From the Website

Some of our more recent posts from the website (see <https://nzffa.com>)



## **How Environment Canterbury Regional Council resource consents have destroyed the outstanding habitat(s) of Great Rakaia Island**

No unmodified habitat remains at the margin of this section of the Rakaia Island. A resource consent is permission from the local council for an activity that might affect the...

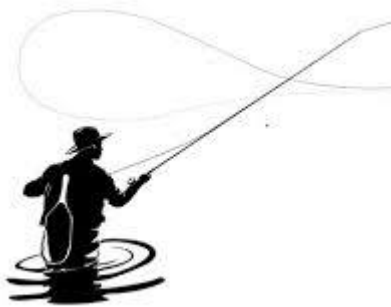
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## **Water Conservation Orders Commonly called WCOs**

When it became clear in the 1970s that there were plans to develop hydroelectric dams on almost every large river in New Zealand, several outdoors groups set up the Wild...

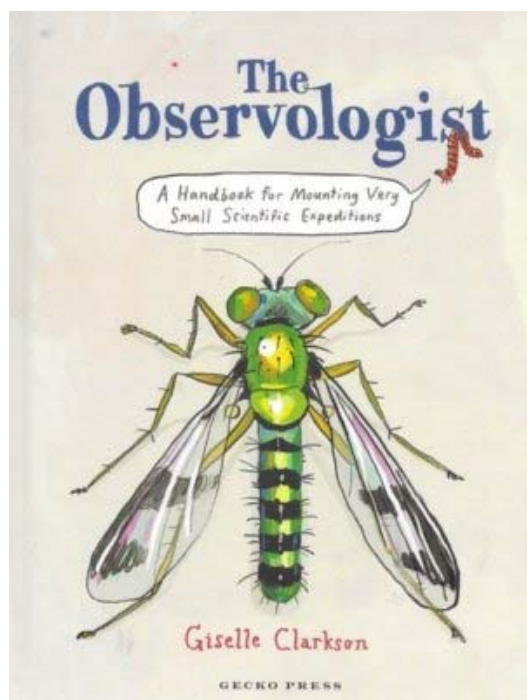
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## Thoughts on Night-time Trout Fishing

by Ben Hope Night-time is a good time to chase bigger trout. Many creatures of the riverside are nocturnal, even the aquatic caddis flies. Then there's mice and we've all...

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## New Books Aims to get Kids Hooked on Nature

Book Review "The Observologist", written and illustrated by Giselle Clarkson.

Published by Gecko Press, price \$39.99.

Reviewed by Tony Orman. The "Observologist" is a highly illustrated, fun-filled guide for young...

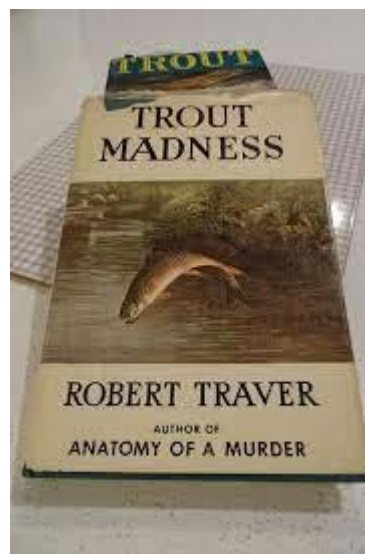
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## Ecan attempts to explain its on / off again application to the Environment Court

<https://www.ecan.govt.nz/get-involved/news-and-events/2023/correcting-the-record-on-the-rakaia-river/> Ecan's aborted application to the Environment Court Readers of the New Zealand Federation of Freshwater Anglers website will be aware that the NZFFA sought donations from members in order..

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## Don't Take Advice Seriously

The more one fishes for trout, then, the more he is forced to the conclusion that no man knows even faintly when or why the fishing will be good or...

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### **Soft Baiting – Jig Head Weights Very Important**

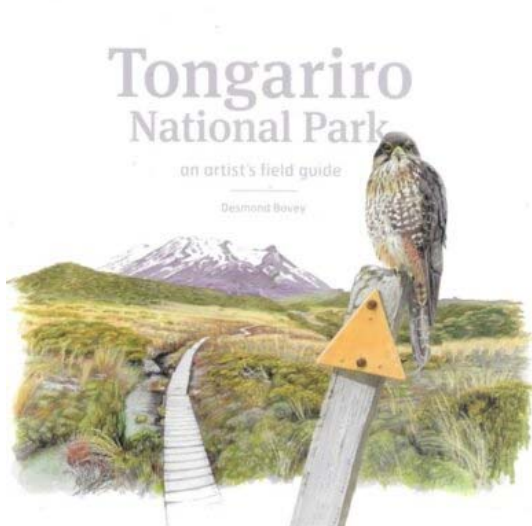
By Allan Burgess The most important thing to get right when fishing soft plastics is to use the correct jig head weights for the conditions and situation in which you...

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### **Fly Fishing and Mental Health: It's Not Just About the Fish**

October 23, 2023 By: Melissa Ceren (Mental Therapist) From Midcurrent News (US)  
Why do we want to be out there? The answer to this question is different for everyone. But for one...

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### **Wonderful Book by Artist/Writer on Tongariro National Park**

Book Review: "Tongariro National Park – An artist's field guide" by Desmond Bovey, published by Potton and Burton, price \$39.99 Reviewed by Tony Orman If you're travelling the Desert Road...

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### **Has Ecan Overplayed its Hand?**

Environment Canterbury clarifies its role in the Rakaia Water Conservation Order  
ECan Media Release, Nov 14 2023 Opinion piece by Dr Peter Trollove Executive Member New Zealand Federation of Freshwater...

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### ONE FACT ABOUT FLY FISHING

by Didymo Dave .....Fly fishermen who fish the Taupo area are keen to know when the spawning runs have commenced? They ask questions like are there many fish in the...

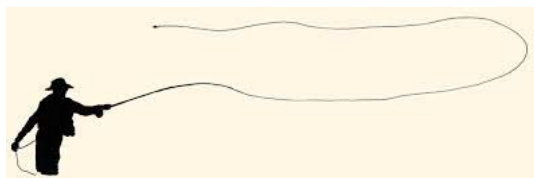
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### Our Grateful Thanks

Our extreme gratitude to all who have responded to our plea for assistance in our new fund-raising efforts. With a couple of legal battles looming, we need all the financial...

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### Alarming Nitrate Levels in Water and Rivers

Opinion by Charlie Baycroft News from Greenpeace that many Southlanders and Cantabrians are exposed to levels of nitrate that are potentially hazardous to human health is alarming. Recent testing confirmed...

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### DOC Increases Hut Prices for Taxpaying public

Pressrelease by Department of Conservation The Department of Conservation is updating accommodation prices for huts, lodges, some campsites, the West Coast's Paparoa Track, and off-season rates for some Great Walk huts. The new prices...

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### **NZ Lakes Are Ailing With Health Issues**

"The Guardian" reports Only 2% of New Zealand's large lakes are in good health, bleak report finds. The number of cows has nearly doubled in a generation, and the resulting fertiliser...

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### **Many Endangered or Lost Species, but Some Extinctions Are Inevitable**

Opinion by Paul Revere Many believe – among them ecologists – believe the world is beset with a massive extinction, the sixth mass extinction which comprises the five previous catastrophic...

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### **Winter Trout Fishing Down South**

by Sally Forth While the Taupo-Rotorua area is usually associated with winter fly fishing, there are many other regional options – and even down south in the South Island. Look...

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### **Stick to Basics in Fly tying**

by Peter Langlands In recent years there has been a lot of activity on the internet about new trout fly patterns. However, while some patterns are highly refined and will...

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### **Memories Can be Better Than Today's Reality**

by Tony Orman Back in the 1980s I discovered a fabulous small trout stream. I've always had a soft spot for small streams. After all I began my serious fly...

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### **How Healthy is Your River? Look to Fish Numbers**

Abridged Pollution is not always easy to spot but there are visible indicators that can reveal whether rivers are in a good ecological state writes the UK's Graham Lawton in...

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## **The Federation's Executive:**

President: Casey Cravens (Canterbury)

Treasurer: David Haynes (Nelson)

Secretary: David Haynes (Nelson)

Committee:

Dr Peter trolove (Rakaia), Steve Gerard (Central South Island), Andi Cockroft (Wellington), Larry Burke (NZ Salmon Anglers), Brett Bensemman (Otago), Casey Cravens (Otago), Colin Taylor (Nelson), Grant Henderson (Auckland), Peter Storey - Advisory (Rotorua), Margaret Adams, Jason Foord (Auckland), Dr Charles Baycroft

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.

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