



NZFFA Febuary 2021 Newsletter

Welcome to Your Newsletter

The Federation's Executive:

President: Peter Trolove (Rakaia)

Treasurer: Strato Cotsilinis (Wellington)

Secretary: Rex Gibson (Christchurch)

Committee:

Steve Gerard (Central South island), Andi Cockroft (Wellington), Larry Burke (NZ Salmon Anglers), David Haynes (Nelson), Malcolm Francis (Kapiti), Zane Mirfin (Nelson), Michael Gregg (Marlborough), Brett Bensemman (Otago), Casey Cravens (Otago).

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.

Water Quality 101

[FINAL-REPORT-Instream-objectives-to-protect-trout-fishery-and-spawning-values-June-2013.PDF](#)

[trout unlimited WaterQualityV2.pdf](#)

Those of you who venture into the outdoors will be familiar with the rule of three; you can survive 3 minutes without air, survive about 3 hours of hypothermia, 3 days without water, and 3 weeks without food. Trout are equally dependant on their aquatic environment for survival. **Water quality is not negotiable.** Trout need suitable water quality at all times – 24/7 365 days a year.

In this post-modernist / neo-liberal age, it seems there are some in our community including water allocators, regulators, and applicant's lawyers who believe water quality parameters are optional or can be set democratically by "community collaboration".

Averaged; flows, "habitat", water temperatures, dissolved oxygen, etc., have no biological meaning.

If New Zealand is to retain its world class but diminishing trout fisheries we cannot ignore this reality.

The NZFFA must hold fast to proven science and not be swayed by those prepared to “spin” science for economic gain;

[Are trout to blame for declining water quality? - Science Media Centre](#)

The NZFFA must not follow F&G’s lead and enter into “collaboration” with Federated Farmers NZ. The table below gives a simplified overview of the some basic water quality parameters which are not negotiable. The table has economic validity because the table was reproduced in an aquaculture text.

No trout farmer would risk their capital in the cavalier manner MfE, politicians, and water users expect anglers to consider. The link above for the Wellington Council sets out the bottom line.

Water quality standards and levels associated with trout health and disease

(mg/L or ppm unless specified)

Parameter	Levels in water associated continuous exposure	Acceptable levels in water
	With fish deaths or acute disease	
PRIMARY PARAMETERS		
Oxygen	< 3.0 >100% saturation	> 6.0 up to 100%
Carbon dioxide	> 15.0	1.5 – 3.0
Nitrogen gas	> 105% saturation	< 103% saturation

Total gases	> 105% saturation	<110 % saturation
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Temperature		
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	> 25 C	
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		< 20 C
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	Growing optimum 14 – 17 C	
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Hatchery		
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	> 11 C	
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		0 – 11 C
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Salinity		
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	> 10 g/L	
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		0.1 – 3.0 g/L
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Smolt and adults undergo physiological change to cope with full sea water (34 g/L)

pH		
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	< 4 – 5, > 9-10	
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		6.7 – 8.6
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Ammonia		
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	> 0.2 -1.0	
--	----------------------	--

		< 0.02
--	--	------------------

Nitrate		
----------------	--	--

	> 100	
--	-----------------	--

		< 1.0
--	--	-----------------

Nitrite		
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	> 2.0 freshwater	
--	----------------------------	--

		< 0.10
--	--	------------------

	>saltwater	
--	----------------------	--

		< 0.1
--	--	-----------------

Total hardness CaCO₃	> 200	
--	-----------------	--

		20 – 200
--	--	-----------------

Total suspended solids	> 5,000 – 100,000	
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		< 80
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Total dissolved solids	> 0.5 – 10.0	
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		< 0.002
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[Compiled from EPA 1973, 1979-80]



Canterbury's freshwater is an ecological disaster and a national disgrace. Environment Canterbury, ECan, allows Water Zone committees in its region to set standards for water quality that are toxic to fish and potentially cancer causing for rural residents who drink from polluted wells.

A trout hatchery would not establish itself at a site where NO₃-N levels are much above 1.0 mg/L. The Selwyn Te Waihora Water Zone sets a groundwater limit of 8.5 mg/L NO₃-N, effectively ruling out trout breeding in the zone's aquifer fed river and streams.

The NZFFA finds this is unacceptable.

Peter Trolove



The Unlearned Lessons of History

In 1990 the Minister of Conservation was the Honourable Philip Woollaston.
He addressed the first Transitional National Council of Fish and Game. It makes

fascinating reading; especially when the recent actions of that council are considered.



Much of it was predictable but here are some selected quotes from that speech.

- “Another clear direction of the new legislation is the accountability of the new councils to the licence holders. This is intended to be a very direct accountability.

..... You will be judged at each election” *Sadly this did not apply to the National Council structure – Ed.*

- “You should aim to reduce the barriers, actual or perceived, to participation. It follows that there is a particular need to encourage young people into the sport.”
- “It is not the intention of the legislation that the National Council interferes with the day-to-day decisions of individual fish and game councils. The role of this council, however, is to establish a standardised framework of policies which guide those decisions on a New Zealand wide basis.”
- In particular the Minister referred to policies on Operational Plans, Management Plans and Electoral System – see below:
- “In developing the legislation it was the government’s intention that elections not be totally aimed at achieving geographical representation.” *Unfortunately that is the current situation – Ed.* “Rather it was intended that only a maximum of six members be elected to provide the geographical spread of membership. That would leave at least half the council to be elected purely on the basis of the skills, experience and qualities they offer”. *Again that got subverted – Ed.*
- “Staff. I believe it is important that there be consistency in both the staff structures and in the terms and conditions on which all staff are employed throughout the country.” *The current Managers’ Cartel pushes the view that any increase their regional councils can give them are fair game.*
- “I believe it is not possible or appropriate for council managers to direct day-to-day operations”. *Yet isn’t that what Cr Shortis is currently doing?* “My comments regarding the need for a manager (or chief executive) also apply to you.” [National Council].

- “I believe the number of standing committees should be kept to an absolute minimum.” *Strangely the latest proposals from Cr Grubb are for an expansion of committees – Ed.*
- “This {committees} avoids the trap many quangos have fallen into in the past in creating a whole bureaucracy through their committee structure.”

The summary theme that I take from the Minister’s comments is that Fish and Game has responsibility for administering the angling and gamebird resources in the interests of licence holders in a framework that reflects democracy and a clear delineation between governance and management.

As a respected colleague pointed out to me recently “The Minister couldn’t have set out more clearly not only how he expected the new organisation to operate but how, in terms of the clarity of constitutional design, it *should* operate. Sadly, most of the operating principles he set out have been progressively defeated (or never properly implemented) by the weight of vested interests. It is tempting to draw some parallels with the ignorant mob storming and despoiling the US Capitol recently but the subversion of the NZ Council and its proper and necessary role has (mostly) been more covert and insidious than that.

The Minister’s prescription is arguably even more relevant today. When the NZC that appointed Martin Taylor, and Martin attempted (belatedly) to put that into effect, they were progressively dealt to. And, earlier attempts to ‘right the boat’, similarly ignored if not actively thwarted.”

Rex N. Gibson.

Official Information Request

Last month the NZFFA put in an Official Information request to the Acting Chief Executive of the National Fish and game Council for the background information and costs (to licence holders) of the "rapid departure" of their CE, Martin Taylor. The official period for reply is up this weekend. If that is not forthcoming we will be forwarding the request to the Ombudsman and Minister as allowed for in the legislation.

ANGLING ADVOCATE of the MONTH

Opinion Piece by Rex N. Gibson

On Waitangi Day Matthew Littlewood of the Timaru Herald (STUFF News) reported on the comments of Central South Island Fish & Game Councillor, Matthew Hall. Cr Hall's comments were direct and clear under the headline "**Councillor warns of Central South Island fisheries declining to 'nothing'.**" The article went national; or viral in the modern idiom..



.Matthew Hall. Photo ex Bejon Haswell - Timaru Herald

The paper he presented to the CSI Council, and the supporting comments from other Councillors in the newspaper report, showed that the lowland rivers in the CSI regional area (from Moeraki in the south to the Rakaia River) have been in serious decline as sports fisheries; especially since the 1990s.

Sadly CSI's Fish and Game chief executive Jay Graybill, after thanking Hall for his comments, took issue with Hall's supposition that "most lowland rivers and waterways in the Central South Island" "no longer support sustainable fisheries and recreation".

"I think the language is incorrect, I'm concerned about the integrity of the council if it makes statements that can't be supported by evidence," Graybill said. Hall

responded that he would retract the statement, but in his opinion, it was true.

This writer agrees fully with Cr Hall, as did several other CSI Councillors on the night. I bought my first angling licence in CSI's largest town, Timaru, in 1961. I have fished in the CSI region every year since 1991. Mr Graybill's comments, whether meant to or not, convey the impression of damage control for licence fee sales.

My observations are that the following rivers in that region no longer carry sustainable trout fisheries from an angling point of view (in the lowland or plains areas): Hinds, Orari, Lower Pareora, Otaio, Makikihi, Waihi, Hei Hei te Moana, and lower Waihao.

Dried lowland riverbed consequences – Photo: University of Canterbury



Rivers teetering on the brink include the Tengawai between Cave and its junction with the Opihi River, the Orari mouth/hapua trout fishery, Ohapi Creek, Temuka River, Lower Hakataramea, Lower Kakanui, at least two Ashburton tributaries, and the sea-run trout fisheries of the Rangitata and Waitaki river hapua. Cr Hall's observations of McKinnon's Creek also raise concern. The Asburton Lakes are similarly on an "at risk" list. Both the traditional medium-sized trout rivers, Opihi and Ashburton, have health warnings attached to them. Cr Hall's paper shows that the region's salmon fishery may be in its death throes as well.

If "evidence" is required, then the comments of the other councillors constitute a "sample survey" from people with combined angling experience in the Centuries of years. Let us hope that the CSI region has more extensive surveys that show otherwise; if scientific integrity is to be preserved. One Councillor advised me

personally that it would be easier to list the lowland rivers that still had sustainable trout fisheries, rather than those which do not, in CSI. He stated “probably only two” were sustainable fisheries.

Cr Alan Brooks was reported as stating “The simple reality is that the fishery is stuffed”. “We’re anglers, we know the stories, and we know the things that are there. What we’re asking is for some direct action. I believe there is sufficient authority for Fish and Game. If we don’t start fighting for the fishery, and we continue to compromise, we’ve had it,” he added.

Toxic Algae – The curse of CSI’s drying braided rivers. Photo: Stuff



The Department of Conservation Rangitata River ranger Brad Edwards, who also

attended the meeting, agreed that recent research into the native fishery Department had shown “some pretty stark outcomes”. “I hope to do my darnedest to help change the river. I'm glad that CSI Fish and Game have shown intent to come on-board. It's beyond repute [that] the river has degraded,” Edwards said. “We've been hearing fishermen for some time talking about loss of smelt,” he added. *The latter point is one that has only really been championed by NZFFA's President (and veterinarian), Peter Trolove, until recent months (Ed).*

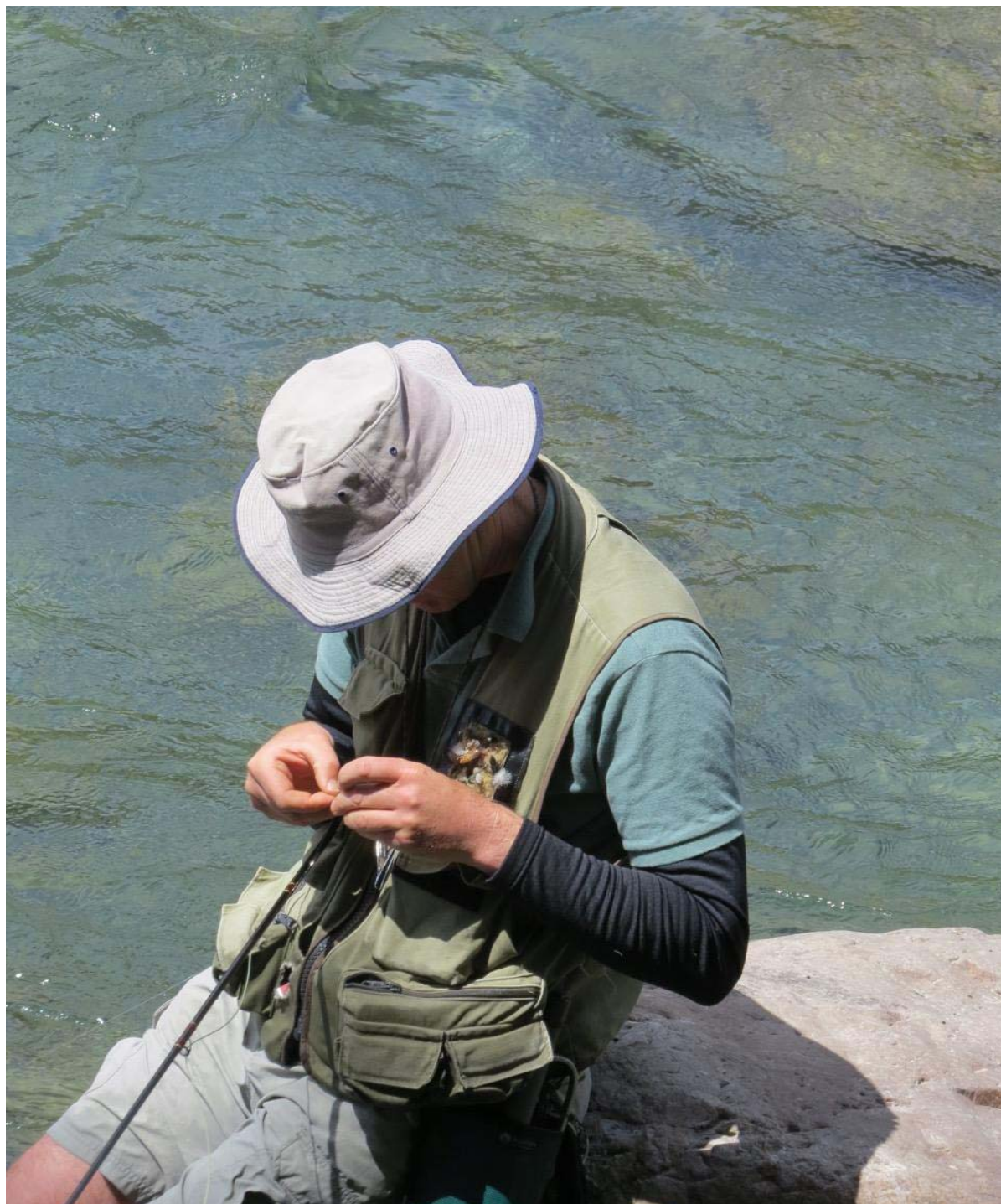
DOC has been considered AWOL, by many anglers, during the rampant dairy conversions of the last 25 years. We hope this signals an awakening by DOC. What the CSI situation highlights, is that the decline is not so much the result of “Environmental Change” but of “Economic Change” where water has been purloined by a section of the agricultural industry; a sector that seeks unlimited water to grow rye grass on porous alluvial soils. It is a practice that is the antithesis of sustainability.

CSI has lived in a licence sale “fools’ paradise” created by the fisheries in the Mackenzie Country canals. The lowland fisheries previously accessible to the youth are now a shadow of their former self. As a teenager I biked from Timaru to the Pareora Huts, and both Pleasant Point and Temuka fisheries were within cycling reach. The current situation means that today's youngsters have far fewer chances of accessing the sport.

I question if the fact that North Canterbury, CSI, Otago and Southland continue to be levied nearly 50% of their licence fee incomes to prop up North island beneficiary regions (and an expensive National Council and National Office) is behind the under-resourcing and apparent failure, of CSI's attempts to maintain its lowland fisheries.

Cr Hall's paper was thorough and provided enough information for a whole edition of the newsletter on its own. Anglers, and all other recreational freshwater users,

need more advocates like CSI's Matthew Hall to take a stand or this and other lowland fisheries in both Islands will disappear very quickly.





.Forget Latin Insect Names, Focus on Fly Presentation

by Tony Orman

In my job as a farming journalist, I attended many field days aimed at making farmers more efficient. Two things struck me but both are interrelated.

The same keen local farmers attended - perhaps 25 percent of all.

1. A recurring theme advocated by guest speakers was the need to strive to be better
2. A thirst for knowledge.

And from that those 25 percent, were invariably the top bracket of farmers.

It's really no different to most things, trout fishing being just one. The old adage is "ten percent of anglers catch 90 percent of fish." I'm not sure of the numbers but in short a minority of trout anglers catch most of the trout.

Why?

Because they are eager for more knowledge and to learn.

With that in mind, I recently picked up a second hand book "Fishing Dry Flies for Trout on Rivers and Streams" by an American writer Art Lee published back in 1981.

Art Lee in his introduction wrote that he was convinced, first and foremost trout fishing should be fun. After admitting that he became too preoccupied at times and lost sight of the "fun", he told of scanning, perusing and reading scores of angling books.

Among them were "tidy ones and tedious ones".

"Some have been useful, a few even inspiring. As a body of work, however they have left me troubled, primarily due to a pervasive bias towards portraying (fly fishing) as much more complicated. Then a page further on, Art Lee says in answer to some critics who might complain that his book "isn't very scientific in contemporary fashion" then they should look elsewhere.

"Those who seek yet another dissertation on aquatic insect life with Latin names" won't find it in his book.

It's an echo of the words of colourful American fly fishing author Lee Wulff who once wryly wrote along the lines of "don't worry about Latin names of insects trout feed on, because trout don't know Latin."

The one disincentive to venturing into dry fly fishing is that some writers and some fly fishers complicate it, weaving a mystique around it that seems quite daunting.

Further over midway through the book Art Lee attacked the theory of "matching the hatch" and the associated second theory of "precise representation".

“Some anglers feel obliged to abandon common sense in favour of obsessively locking themselves into precise representation — as if failure to do so would erase all chance of success.”
Art Lee went further at the risk of offending some when he added, that he had met few people preoccupied with precise representation who he believed were truly skilled fly fishermen.
“I have witnessed though, many anglers who attempt to rationalise deficiencies in technique by spending countless hours memorising insect species by Latin names and then concocting replicas of them, hours that would be more wisely used, mastering the elements of fly presentation.”

Trout - the Canary in the Coal-mine

Opinion by Tony Orman, life member of NZ Federation Freshwater Anglers

An article in today's (Feb 2) newspaper was titled “NZ's Cancer Survival Rates Improve”. Heartening news but the smaller print contained a significant statistic. “Lung and colorectal cancer account for most cancer deaths each year - about 1700 and 1200 respectively.”

Logically it's vital to track the problem to the cause and the cause may well be nitrate levels in drinking water. The use of fertiliser, and effluent from farm animals, allows nitrates to get into ground water and as a highly soluble chemical not removed by normal filtration, it seeps into aquifers.

Otago University professor of public health Dr Michael Baker sounded a strong warning in July 2019 based on a major US study which found nitrate pollution may be causing up to 12,500 cancer cases there annually.

An earlier Danish study of 2.7 million people over 23 years published in the International Journal of Cancer in 2018, monitored their nitrate exposure levels and colorectal cancer rates. It found a link between nitrates and colorectal cancer - but here's the rub - at pollution levels much lower than New Zealand currently allows in drinking water. Dr Michael Baker said the US study proved that what the Danes found was not a one-off.

"It's much more comprehensive because they did what's called a meta-analysis - where they took the results of the Danish study and another seven high

quality studies to come up with what they call a very good dose-response relationship.

Dr Baker said based on the numbers in the study, 50 people could be dying from bowel cancer every year in New Zealand because of nitrates in their drinking water. He called for a New Zealand study examining the link between nitrate pollution and cancer terming it “long overdue.” Then he identified the almost certain cause in New Zealand - “Our water is getting a lot more contaminated because of our absolute love-affair with nitrate fertilisers.”

Rates of bowel cancer vary across New Zealand with the highest incidence in South Canterbury. Nationally bowel cancer is the second-highest cause of cancer death in New Zealand and each year around 3,000 people are diagnosed and 1200 die of the disease.

Canterbury medical officer of health Dr Alistair Humphrey told RNZ at the time “Let's not put our community at risk by exposing them to nitrates in their drinking water, let's do the research ... so we understand the real risk to New Zealanders.”

But authorities seem to be in a state of denial. In June 2019 a Stuff report said, “Government has rejected calls to re-examine safe levels of nitrates in drinking water, despite concerns from health experts, academics, environmentalists and councils over links between the chemical and cancer.” Ministry of Health staff were quoted as saying they were happy with current nitrate regulations. The Ministry rejected calls for further study.

That was despite the fact that a third of water samples monitored by the Christchurch City Council over the last decade exceeded the level at which the Danish study warned there could be a higher risk of colorectal cancer.

When it comes to nitrate toxicity, the “canary in the coal mine” may arguably be trout. The levels of nitrates in Canterbury, as tested by the NZ Federation of Freshwater Anglers, are toxic to trout and native fish.

Is it coincidence that eels once abundant are now in a precarious position and endangered? The longfin eel is now classified by the Department of Conservation as “chronically threatened in gradual decline” and is thus in the same category as the Great Spotted Kiwi, NZ Falcon and Kereru (wood pigeon). Yet the Department of Conservation show no interest and concern

over the deteriorating water quality. Other native fish such as galaxiids and kokopu are also species found in the freshwater ecosystem. DoC has a statutory obligation to protect native species.

The presence of nitrates in waterways, often concentrated by irrigation draw-offs that exceed water allocation limits, accelerates algae growth. Freshwater scientists have long pushed for nitrate limits to stem explosions of algae, but restrictions have often been non-existent. Only when they turn toxic is any attention paid to them. Their role in diurnal hypoxia is ignored.

A significant coincidence is that the Australian and NZ guideline for healthy aquatic ecosystems for nitrate is close to the level required to be under the colorectal cancer risk value found in the Danish study.

This throws into the spotlight the repugnant actions of the National government when they seized state control of Environment Canterbury (ECan) and installed their own hand-picked “puppet” commissioners with the agenda being to accelerate dairying expansion particularly by corporate dairying moguls. It was a shameful act - an affront to democracy, public health and environmental values - that will forever define Prime Minister John Key and Environment Minister Nick Smith.

Since then, the Labour led government has done little tangible to deal with the problem. Arguably it has been lax and lethargic. Where is PM Adern’s “well-being” philosophy in this problem?

AWOL - absent without leave.

The health of our waterways and aquifers, and human health values go hand in hand and are intricately linked. Trout health and spawning success is undeniably the “canary in the coal mine” of our waterways



Marlborough Freshwater Anglers' Club Inc 3 February, 2021 4

Is There a Cure for Fishing Fever? 'This article by "Angler's Wife" was in a 1938 "NZ Fishing and Shooting Gazette" magazine.

We reproduce it here in slightly abridged form in the hope it may help some wives and partners. One thing about husbands they are all daft about something. When a women gets married she accepts a new job. A man goes in for marriage as a sideline to his main occupation. With mine it happens to be fishing, which is worse than ever. I knew before I was married. They said "You're marrying Joe Williams? He's the angler isn't he? Oh well, maybe it'll be alright. I thought I could fix him,

“adapt him” I called it. I later realised you can cure them of leprosy easier. For me, I’m reasonable. I don’t object to his spending all his half days fishing. I can shut my ears to his long, long, fishing stories. But to me this fishing business is like over-smoking or biting your nails. They ought to advertise things to cure it. Fishing is more than amusement. It is more than an occupation. As far as I can see it is in the nature of a faith. For as my husband grows older, he grows dafter. What I complain of most of all is a fisherman’s inconsistency. He will wait for hours by the water on the chance conditions will come right. Yet should I be five minutes late in preparing his breakfast, there are words. A trout it seems is a creature to be wooed and coaxed with infinite patience. Breakfast has to come immediately it’s whistled for. On his fishing outings, my husband wears a hat with flies festooned in it. Soft and greenish shapeless and abominable, the hat carries flies in it as a crown carries jewels. No fishermen would admit the flies are stuck in the hat primarily as a decoration, yet such is the case. The whole affair is as arrant a piece of exhibitionism as I’ve ever met. Sometimes he goes fishing at night, a thing I heartily disapprove of, since the effect on his temper can be vile to a degree. He may fish but he doesn’t always catch something. The excuse are legendary. When the breeze is right, the light is wrong, when the light is right, the sun was too strong earlier when the sun and the light and the breeze and the water and the lure and temperature are all satisfactory. Then it seems the fault must be in his horoscope. The ideal fishing day only comes on one occasion. That is when we have guests in the house and my husband must chafe indoors. If you want to know just what life is like with a mono-maniac, a 37 year old schoolboy - a perpetual after dinner speaker and a night watchman all rolled into one - marry an angler.

The Perch is a Valued Sporting Fish - not a Pest



Opinion by Tony Orman Currently Fisheries NZ has a discussion document open for public submissions, in which it is proposed to list perch as a “pest fish” – contrary to the...

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Why are the Polluters "Managing" our Freshwater?

by Dr Peter Trolove President NZ Federation of Freshwater Anglers (NZFFA) In the US the Environmental Protection Agency EPA sets the limit for safe drinking water at 10mg/L NO3-N In...

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Trinity Lands Corporate Dairy Farms Fined - Fonterra Links

A very recent Radio NZ report of 26 January has told of Waikato farmers being warned to clean up their farms. Recently seven farms across the Waikato have been prosecuted...

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New PR Direction for Fish and Game NZ?

The winds of change may be about to blow away years of antagonism by Fish and Game New Zealand towards farming

writes Neal Wallace in the latest issue of Farmers...

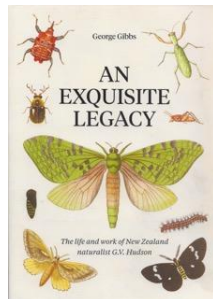
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Radio NZ reveals Big Companies Big Polluters

Radio NZ has reported Talleys, Ernest Adams and Yoplait are among hundreds of manufacturers and brands dumping contaminants into New Zealand's drains and getting away with it. The same sorts of...

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The Life and Work of NZ Naturalist G V Hudson

Book Review: "An Exquisite Legacy" by George Gibbs. Published by Potton and Burton. Price \$59.99 Reviewed by Tony Orman. This book is the life and story of George Hudson (1867-1947 an...

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Waikato Dairying Corporate Pollutes Trout Stream

A farming company, Trinity Lands Limited, operating 20 farms in south Waikato has been convicted in the Tokoroa District Court

on January 16 for polluting a Waikato trout stream and...

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NZ Smelt Decline Crisis Mirrored Other Side of World

by Dr Peter Trolove Press ReleaseNZ Federation of Freshwater Anglers17 January, 2021NZ Smelt Decline Crisis Mirrored Other Side of World A drastic decline in an important native fish in New...

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