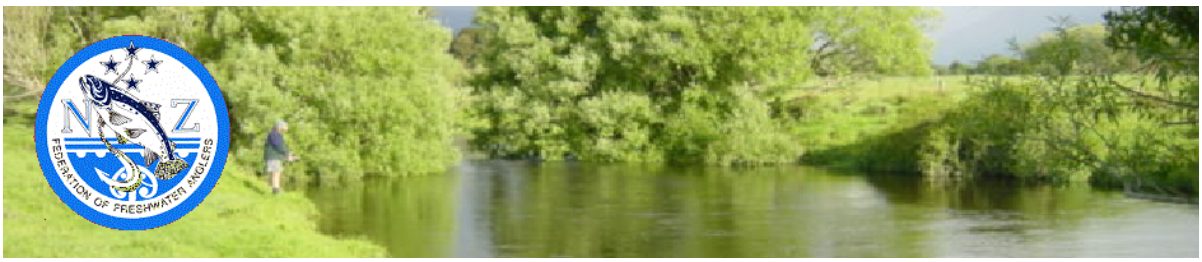

NZFFA November 2022 Newsletter

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Stop Press

NZFFA will/have hosting/hosted a nitrate water testing site at the Richmond A&P show on theweekend 19-20 November 2022. Richmond District has some of the highest nitrate levels in ground water across New Zealand so we'll be/have recording/recorded and reporting/reported the results. The Richmond town supply reads between 5 and 6mg/NO3/l and private bore supplies can exceed this.

The suspected source of the nitrates is fertiliser use for vegetable cropping.

Unfortunately there is little resolve for those whose water is

contaminated; Tasman District Council issue resource consents for private bores but take no responsibility for the water quality, Taumata Arowai (the recently formed Water Services Regulator) issue water standards but take no responsibility for any pollution sources and do not include private water supplies for single dwellings and the District Health Boards seem unaware or unwilling to take the issue on.

What is playing out across the Richmond Plains is almost a duplicate of the recently highlighted issue of the Oceania Dairy Factory spraying tonnes of highly nitrated waste water on to ghost paddocks in Canterbury which has infiltrated town drinking water supplies: Waimate District Council blame the highly unexpected rain falling out of the sky in winter, ECan issue resource consents which sanction excessive nitrate limits with no limits for cessation, Taumata Arowai stated it is nothing to do with them and Oceania stated they are working within the conditions of the resource consent. The tragi-comedy can be read at https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/478670/scientist-s-dairy-factory-concerns-over-unsafe-drinking-water

Will nitrate pollution become Ecan's Havelock North?

A Public Health Concern

Six hundred and fifteen residents supplied by the Waihao Rural Water Scheme in the Waimate district have drinking

water nitrate levels in excess of the (1958) WHO drinking water maximum allowable value (MAV) of 50 mg/L nitrate, or 11.3 mg/ NO3-N.

This is the second Canterbury community drinking water supply to exceed the MAV for drinking water in recent years.

District Councils are charged with ensuring community drinking supplies are safe.

It is left to rural residents to ensure their private wells are safe.

Thousands of rural Cantabrians are left to manage their water on their own amid conflicting assertions and spin generated by agribusiness and self-interested councillors & staff prompted by personal, political, and financial considerations rather than a wider concern for public and environmental health.

The Canterbury Regional Council with the ironic brand *Environment Canterbury,* or Ecan, has for over a decade failed to meet its statutory responsibility, (S. 30 of the RMA), to maintain or enhance the region's freshwater quantity and quality.

This has been the subject of mass protests, letters to the press, critical comment by senior environmental reporters, and national and overseas film documentaries.

Dr Alistair Humphrey, (when the Canterbury DHB's Chief Medical Officer of Health), voiced his frustration with Ecan at a community meeting I attended at Lincoln in 2021. He compared Ecan to the (negligent) Hawkes Bay and Hastings Councils in the Havelock North fiasco and stated *"my role is to advise Ecan that Canterbury has the highest pollution and rates of waterborne disease of any region in New Zealand.* ***It seems Ecan's role is not to listen!"***

Is nitrate polluted drinking water a Public Health issue?

A Fonterra and MBIE commissioned risk assessment carried out by two ESR Ltd toxicologists assumed it was safe so long as you consumed antioxidants with your drinking water. Such commissioned "science" should be read with suitable cynicism and caution.

In the last decade there have been an increasing number of International peer reviewed studies showing correlations between high nitrate levels in drinking water and a number of adverse health outcomes including bowel & other cancers, premature birth & shortened gestation, and birth defects including neural tube defects. Many of these references and reviews can be found on Pub Med, the United States online medical library.

In contrast to "New Zealand Inc." selling a narrative to retain agribusiness's licence to pollute, public health authorities in several US states are now warning private well users of the risks of drinking nitrate polluted water. States like Iowa who are conducting long term monitoring of thousands of their rural citizens are finding correlations with bowel and other cancers consistent with the oft quoted Danish study. These State officials are acting responsibly in the face of emerging science.

By contrast Ecan's response has been to play down the nitrate related environmental and public health concerns for the sake of "economic sustainability".

Such a "laissez faire" approach may leave Ecan open to class action law suits when enough Cantabrians suffer harm from its failures to manage the region's water.

Ecan's nitrate "time bomb"

Despite pleas from concerned environmental advocacy groups such as the Water Rights Trust for Ecan to take a precautionary approach toward use of the region's freshwater resource, Ecan has consented massive irrigation development greatly increasing diffuse nitrate pollution with no proven means of monitoring or controlling the outcome.

These consents are in essence ten to thirty year term shields protecting the polluting water users from their common law liability.

Previous governments have all failed to give direction to Ecan until 2014 when the National government issued the first (inappropriate) "bottom line" for nitrate of 6.9 mg/L NO3-N through the MfE's National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS FM).

This was the "bottom line" recommended in a 2009 Ecan commissioned report authored by Chris Hickey of NIWA based on a review of limited overseas and local 96 hour LD 50 studies. (LD 50 determines the exposure that kills 50% of the sample over 96 hours. It does not reflect chronic exposure). This limit which was adopted by Ecan was subsequently increased to 8.5 mg/L through "collaboration" by Water Zone Committees stacked with stakeholders, (irrigators & dairy farmers), including current Ecan councillor and dairy farmer John Sunckell.

(When the NZFFA reported to the full Ecan council in October 2021 that the nitrate levels in the Selwyn River had reached 9.95 mg/L NO3-N and asked for Ecan to take corrective action, councillor Sunckell's dismissive response was that *"in a democracy you do not always get what you want"*).

Claiming *"not one to kick the (freshwater) can down the road",* Minister for the Environment, David Parker, set up a Scientific Technical and Advisory Group (STAG group) composed of 19 ecologists and scientists to recommend a "bottom line" that would protect aquatic environments. The STAG recommendation of 1.0 mg/L NO3-N was subsequently elevated to 2.4 mg/L by the agriculture lobby who were given the final say.

The current "bottom line" in the NPS FM, released in August 2020, "requires immediate practical remediation" once the 2.4 mg/L No3-N level is exceeded.

The NZFFA's monthly monitoring of surface and

groundwater in the Selwyn Water Zone found nitrate levels in Hart's Creek and the lower Selwyn River has exceeded this "bottom line" by up to 4 times.

The NZFFA has supported Dr Tim Chambers' public health research with data obtained from conducting community water testing both alone and in conjunction with Greenpeace. Our "snapshot" results were up to 50% higher than the 5 year means posted on the Land Air and Water Aotearoa (LAWA) website.

Feedback when the NZFFA repeated its Springston South community testing after a gap of two years it found the results had either increased or stayed the same.

Where intensive dairying is carried out on light vulnerable irrigated soils and where waste water from dairy factories, meat plants, and treated sewage waste water is applied to "ghost farms", the downslope monitoring wells show an increase in nitrate levels often exceeding the MAV for drinking water of 11.3 mg/L.

There is no evidence that Ecan's NZ$60 million Regional Plan has slowed diffuse nitrate pollution of Canterbury's groundwater. NZFFA results show nitrate pollution of freshwater is getting worse.

We are not to blame?

A Radio New Zealand report 14 November by Farah Hancock https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/478670/scientist-s-dairy-factory-concerns-over-unsafe-drinking-water provides a record of industry and council responses to the Waimate nitrate pollution event that could not have been dreamed up for a comedy script

Ecan

Oceania is consented to spread wastewater from dairy processing onto 316 ha of un-grazed land at 400 kg N /ha/year

Farmers are allowed to spread up to 190 kg N /ha/year as synthetic fertilizer.

Although Ecan issues consents to discharge contaminants to land, it is not responsible for water supplies and would not contribute to the cost of denitrification

Ecan was unable to provide RNZ with information as to whether monitored wells breached consent limits

Ecan said if wells were higher than the MAV, it did not mean Oceania had breached its consent limits.

If drinking water was compromised by a consent issued by a regional council, a review of the consent could be requested.

(Ecan has previously hired "Independent Commissioners" who approved the renewal of the Mayfield Hinds Valetta irrigation scheme consents in "order to give MHV time to comply with its consent conditions").

Taumata Arowai

"Taumata Arowai's role is to ensure drinking water supplied to residents is safe but it was not involved in establishing causes of contamination.

It is comfortable with the councils handling of the issue".

The Waimate District Council

Staff at the Waimate District Council felt it was difficult to conclude the factory's waste water had impacted on the drinking water supply.

Waimate District Council previously suggested flooding was to blame.

The council was planning to permanently lower nitrate levels by upgrading its water treatment plant, a process unlikely to be completed until at least mid-2023.

The council needed to balance economic, environmental and health impacts.

A new system would cost between $500,000 and S750, 000 plus ongoing operational costs.

(The mayor of the Selwyn District has estimated it would cost $1.7 billion to remove nitrate from the larger Rolleston drinking water supply. It would appear the Waimate District Council has yet to determine the high cost of removing nitrate from community water supplies).

Dr Tim Chambers

Otago University research scientist Dr Tim Chambers said Waimate's drinking water nitrate contamination could be linked to recent changes in land use, including waste water discharge from Oceania Dairy's factory in South Canterbury

Oceania

Oceania Dairy's general manager said its bores were tested monthly for nitrate. "No elevated levels of nitrate have been detected in these bores which are in very close proximity to land on which our treated wastewater is dispersed"

(NZFFA would be interested to learn the depth of these wells. If the wells were shallow i.e. 0 to 50 meters this defence has some merit. If the bores accessed a deeper semi-confined aquifer the comment is simply an evasion)

Oceania was "extremely disappointed" by a Greenpeace release which raised Chamber's concerns that the factory's wastewater could be contributing to the levels.

The New Zealand Federation of Freshwater Anglers

The NZFFA is a small incorporated society of volunteers representing the interests of anglers and angling clubs throughout New Zealand.

Our involvement in the nitrate debate was prompted by the dramatic decline in water quality and quantity of Canterbury's lowland rivers and streams due to over abstraction and eutrophication caused by pollution from excess nutrients.

The NZFFA took the lead from freshwater ecologist Dr Mike Joy to conduct nitrate testing of Canterbury's water in order to explain the declining abundance of native and recreational fish.

With no interest from DOC or Ecan, the NZFFA has been helping with the Otago University Public Health study in the belief that "blue baby" deaths and cancers might jolt apathetic ratepayers into action.

The recent 2022 local government elections revealed Canterbury ratepayers prefer councillors who deliver short term economic outcomes rather than those wanting to protect the Region's freshwater for the safety and enjoyment of current and future generations.

"In a democracy you do not always get what you want".

Sadly neither the current NZFFA executive nor culpable councillors will be around to see the longer term consequences of Canterbury's water pollution.

Dr Peter Trolove

President NZFFA

Stop Press

Fishing On the East Coast Started badly owing to long spells of bad weather and flooding. The white baiters were also affected. Ruakituri and Hangaroa / Waioeka rivers are now settling for Summer. Lake Waikaremoana ok at this time and…

More

Stop Press

Apparently the trout in the Tongariro are still spawning and the recent rain has brought more fresh fish into the river. Best action seemed to be on the wet line (rabbits and green or brown woolly buggers) but small (12…

More

The Predator Phobia is Misplaced

Opinion by Tony Orman

New Zealand has for many decades waged a war against predators. Currently there are a number of anti-predator campaigns, often using public money in big spend-ups on futile aerial poisoning exercises. In addition, in the end, the blanket operations run counter to the impassioned aim of exterminating predators (e.g. rats) and instead cause major disruption to food chains and serious damage to the ecosystem.

Invariably anti-predator campaigns have as foundation, an "anti-introduced species phobia" which ideologically decree that anything introduced such as trout and even salmon, are invasive pests.

Trout Invasive?

Trout are often labelled as invasive pests by agencies as Forest and Bird and the Department of Conservation while farming spokesman seek a scapegoat for water contamination or excessive abstraction for irrigation.

Nature knows best. Trout were introduced and after an initial upsurge, populations stabilised to fit the "carrying capacity" of the habitat and merged into ecological niches and relationships with other species. "Introduced" trout may prey on whitebait but then native shags and native eels prey on juvenile trout. Aren't humans an introduced species by way of a Polynesian migration about the 13th century and

European migration starting in the 19th century?
Currently the obsessive hatred about predators is seen in campaigns such as Predator Free 2050 and Zero Invasive Predators, the latter jazzily known by the acronym of ZIP. The zealous programmes have earned international recognition such as when "Time" magazine proclaimed "Rats, Possums and Stoats Beware! New Zealand Goes to War Against Invasive Pests."
But the programmes are like the 1837 Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale "The Emperor's New Clothes". At one stage in the fable, the wise man serving the Emperor thinks "What!" "Is it possible that I am a fool? I have never thought so myself. No one must know it now if I am so. Can it be, that I am unfit for my job?"
Questions Needed
Those questions should be asked of those who champion Predator Free 2050 and ZIP - people from Prime Ministers to central and local government politicians, local bodies, naive unquestioning media whoop as investigative journalists, extreme green groups and even unprincipled "scientists" following the money trail of funding, all pursue the dream of exterminating New Zealand's predators.
However the reality is the dreams are running against the way Nature behaves.

Haast Eagle preyed on moa.

Wildlife mangers overseas are increasingly regarding predators as an important part of a healthy ecosystem. In 2014 Al S Glen of New Zealand's Landcare Research and Christopher Dickman of Sydney University co-authored a book on "Carnivores of Australia" and in a chapter "The Importance of Predators" said "to maintain or restore functioning ecosystems, wildlife managers must consider the ecological importance of predators."

Predators tend to remove vulnerable prey, such as the old, injured, sick, or very young, leaving more food for the survival and success of healthy prey species. Also, by controlling the size of prey populations, predators help slow down the spread of disease. Predators will catch healthy prey when they can, but catching sick or injured or unwary prey is far more likely and helps in the formation of healthier prey populations because only the fittest animals survive and are able to reproduce.

In addition, predators help to reduce the negative impacts that their prey may have on the ecosystem if they become too abundant or it they stayed in one area for too long. Anglers broadly speaking, are a predator of trout and salmon as are eels and shags and even seals when they ascend rivers..

Caroline Fraser writing for the US Yale School of the Environment said experts "beginning with aquatic experiments, have amassed considerable evidence of damage done to food chains by predator removal and have extended such studies to land."

Predators Natural

Predators are simply mostly a part of any ecosystem's food chain functioning. New Zealand's native falcon prey on other native birds such as tuis and bellbirds. Blue duck (whio) prey almost entirely on aquatic invertebrates, mostly caddisfly larvae. Kiwi prey on worms. When animals of a predatory nature are introduced such as rats and stoats were to New Zealand, they go through a "boom and bust" phase before their populations settle down to a relatively static state. Unfortunately, sometimes prey species can become drastically reduced or even extinct as a result of the predator "boom". The critical aspect of managing this situation is avoiding predator "booms". Consequently,the fervour and haste which the Department of Conservation and local councils applies with toxins is

mismanagement, reckless and fraught with ecological danger.

Disastrous Outcomes

Large scale poisoning with eco-toxins such as 1080 and brodifacoum may heavily reduce predator numbers initially but with a few short years, the outcome is disastrous. The science is there to show the resurgence in predator numbers and subsequent wrecking of the food chain.

Wendy Ruscoe in a study published in Landcare Research's publication 2008 showed aerial dropping of 1080 will temporarily knock back a rat population but due to the rodent's amazing reproductive capacity, the surviving rats recover rapidly and within three years, are likely to be two to three times greater than before poisoning began.

A 2007 study by Landcare scientists Graham Nugent and Peter Sweetapple showed rat numbers recovered pre-poison levels within 18 months and at the two to three year mark, rat abundance could be four times greater than before poisoning.

Ecological Damage

That is not counting the birds and insects and other invertebrate organisms killed by 1080 as research demonstrated, by DSIR scientist Mike Meads, in the 1980's. 1080 was originally patented as an insecticide in 1927.

Examples are many of human interference directly or indirectly into Nature's food chains resulting in profound consequences. In a classic 1966 experiment, biologist Robert Paine removed the purple seastar, Pisaster ochraceus — a voracious mussel-feeder — from an area of coastline in Washington state. The predator gone, mussels exploded in numbers, crowding out biodiverse kelp communities with monoculture.

Less than a decade after Pisaster, marine ecologists James Estes and John Palmisano reached the astonishing and widely reported conclusion that hunting of sea otters had caused the collapse of kelp forests around the Aleutian Islands. With otters reduced to low levels, the prey (sea urchins) stripped the kelp forests.

Playing God

The concept of being "predator free" or "zero predators" has no ecological justification, except in limited circumstances on smaller offshore islands and "mainland islands" . Even in islands where predators may have been eliminated e.g. Secretary Island in Fiordland, the success is short-lived and temporary as animals can and do swim from the mainland to recolonise.

It seem incomprehensible that an agency such as the Department of Conservation and the concepts of Predator Free 2050 and ZIP should go unquestioned in the light of the understanding internationally of the dangers of playing God with predators..
But the 'fly in the ointment' is human nature. For example a scientist in DOC working on predator work, arguably has a vested interest by way of employment and a handsome salary. Similarly with any consultant scientist attached to Predator Free 2050 and ZIP.
For others of zealous ideological nature, as some humans are wont to be, it becomes the pursuit of "The Impossible Dream."
For politicians it's good P.R. to declare war on the baddies, no matter how pointless and damaging that might be.
The sad outcomes are the gross misuse of public funds and more tragically the profound ecological damage that often occurs in the pursuit of that "Impossible Dream."

Footnote: Tony Orman has spent a lifetime in the outdoors observing and reading about it and Nature. He has had some two dozen books published, mainly on fishing, deerstalking, conservation and rural life.

Aren't anglers really predators of trout?

Spinning Thoughts
by Jim Mcintosh

Ultra-light spinning is ideal for low water conditions such as mid-summer. You can fish very light lures. There used to be little fly spoons arounds. They were called that because they were so light and tiny that they could be fished on a fly rod.

Under exceptionally low clear water they are quite deadly. But you need weight to cast them. The solution?

Pinch 3 to 5 split shot above the spinner.

Lighter nylon will enable you to cast further but don't go too light. You'll get broken by hooked fish and if you can manage to land a fish, it'll be so stressed, that it'll probably die if released. So in that case you're better to take the trout home.,

Vary the Retrieve

Reel fast, reel slow, change it up. Depending on how aggressive the trout are feeling, one might work better than another. As a general rule, retrieve more slowly in cold water and faster in warm, but this is by no means set in stone. Just keep trying until you find what works.

Change of Light

The change of light from night to day (dawn) and day to night (dusk) are always optimum times to fish during very hot, mid-summer days. For that matter the "change of light" is good anytime during spring, summer and autumn. Winter is different as water temperature comes into platy as a factor since trout respond to water temperature. Then in winter, tend to fish around midday or mid-afternoon when water temperatures are highest.

Seven Spinning Tips

by "Gold Devon"

Spinning is a successful way to catch trout and your success will be greater by following some basic rules.

1. Look for willow lined pools or stable pools that have cover such as groynes and flood protection rock walls that give all-important shelter, stability and food to trout.
2. Fish after high flows. Water that is just clearing is ideal for a lure such as a black toby
3. Fish edges, such as the edge along banks or the edge of a drop-off, up along edge of willows. Think "edge".
4. Keep moving. Don't keep casting over and over into the one place. Vary it with a cast upstream and a quick retrieve, then on a 45 degree angle upstream, then straight across, and one downstream along the bank. Then move on. Generally fishing upstream is best.
5. Keep your hooks sharp with a little sharpening stone

6. Use the right lure for the conditions. Bladed Mepps spinners are ideal for shallow water riffles mainly fished upstream with a rapid retrieve back down. Black Tobys are good for deeper water but allow a count of 10 or so to let it sink. Rapalas? Try a variety of lures especially soft baits jigged along near the bottom.
7. Pick the better spin conditions. Cloudy days are best for spinning and even fishing in a light rain can be both productive and enjoyable.

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Lesson in High Country Musterers' Love of Nibbie

by Tony Orman

There's an invaluable piece of equipment whether in the hills or on the river. A walking stick!

High country sheep musterers call it a nibbie - an essential item to musterers, particularly in the South Island's mountain country. Talk to high country sheep musterers of the old days and high country farmers today whether they're teenagers or in the autumn of their years - the nibbie was and still is an indispensable tool.

And it should be for hunters and even trout anglers as a wading stick.

A good Marlborough friend the late Lionel Winstanley, mustered Marlborough's backcountry and regarded the nibbie as "essential."

"It was a good stick for support getting across shingle screes. It was like a third leg in precarious situations such as on screes or crossing a river."

In earlier decades, nibbies or mustering sticks were one indispensible tool to the men who worked the high country on foot. Notched and sometimes inscribed with the names of stations worked, the wooden nibbie had immense versatility. Like the hikers' walking pole of today it was used for balance, in the case of the musterer essential for crossing shingle screes.

It was invaluable on a frozen hillside, being used on the uphill side to push out and keep one's feet in a more horizontal position.

Unlike the commercial walking poles of today, the nibbie was multi-functional to musterers. It was good for taking a boiling billy off the fire, jamming it into the ground for use as a dog tether in a land of few trees or to hang a slaughtered sheep in camp. They were handmade from a straight length of tough manuka or lancewood. Nibbies are still used today when mustering cattle, especially around the yards.

Most nibbies were "handmade" from manuka with an occasional one from lance wood. The mustering stick was versatile around camp too - taking a boiling billy off the camp fire-jammed into soft ground, a good stake to tie a dog or two up to or even hanging a slaughtered sheep up in camp with two men holding the nibbie at each end while the third did the skinning and gutting.

I made one out of a piece of lancewood that had been felled in a forestry operation. I cut it off to about shoulder height, let it dry then bored a hole in the top and looped a leather boot strap through it. Manuka is good and a hunting-fishing friend, reckons willow is as good as any. Why not? Cricket bats are made from willow.

With both manuka and willow, strip the bark off and it will dry and harden to excellent strength. If you leave the bark on, it won't take on that 'hard as nails' strength.

Today in the outdoors shops you can buy some classy light metal ones including telescopic ones.

I've found a nibbie ideal in all situations. The musterers found it great on steep scree slopes either on the uphill side or on the downhill side. It's great going downhill especially if you have a pack load of venison or wild pork on your back, the extra weight and gravity tending to push you down faster than you wish. A nibbie going downhill ahead of you, eases the braking strain on the knees.

Going uphill it's an aid, enabling you to push up and off it .

It's handy getting across a fence, pushing the wire, often barbed, down while you straddle over it. If the fence is electrified, it's non-conducting property is ideal to push the wire down as you step over.

Crossing bouldery, backcountry rivers, the nibbie used on the downstream side is a wonderful aid and preventive insurance against taking a dunking and for safety. It's ideal for the trout fisher particularly on high country rivers.

Trampers also should carry a nibbie in the backcountry, a great insurance in crossing rivers.

Don’t Forget Wee Wet Flies and Kate McLaren
by Ben Hope

You may be too young to remember the little wet flies that were all the vogue in trout fishing prior to the advent of nymph fishing in the 1970s. My early teenage years trout fishing with a fly rod in the early 1950s were based around wet flies such as the Peveril of the Peak, Hardies Favourite, Red Tip Governor and March Brown.

They are patterns that many will not have heard of. And don’t be fooled by the loose terminology of “wet fly.” It’s applied today to Taupo fly lures but in imitating a small fish such as whitebait (Grey Ghost) or cockabully (Mrs Simpson) they are quite different from the traditional English wet fly patterns such March Brown and Hardies Favourite which generally imitate a hatching aquatic insect or nymph. The Taupo type lures should be known as ‘wet fly lures’ to avoid confusion.

Today you will rarely see in tackle shops, a little wet fly of the patterns I’ve recalled.

Yet they are a most effective fly to use particularly in the evenings.

The other evening, on the Wairau River I tied on a little wet fly called Kate McLaren.
I hooked into three browns one after another. Kate has become my “first choice” little wet fly.

I came across the pattern when visiting Scotland some years ago. Ferreting around in fascinating Scottish tackle shops I was told of Kate McLaren.

“I always make sure I have a few Kate McLaren’s in my fly box as I know I can fish confidently if I have a Kate on my cast,” one chap told me. That comment is oft repeated.

Google Kate McLaren and you’ll find comments like this about Kate McLaren,

“For me this is the classic Scottish wet fly. Not to have a Kate in your box when chasing brownies is criminal. My all time favourite top dropper fly. While deadly for sea trout I think it is at its best for brownies.”

And another glowing testimonial - “An essential brown trout pattern.”

First tied in the 1930s, by William Robertson for John McLaren, and named after his wife, it was brought to fame by their son, Charles, the long term proprietor of a famous Scottish angling retreat.

I purchased a couple of Kate McLarens in Scotland but heaven knows where the originals are now. It doesn't matter because the pattern is easy to tie. It is;-

Hook: standard 12 or 14.
Thread: Black
Body: Black seals fur
Rib: Thin silver tinsel
Tail: Golden pheasant crest
Body hackle: Black Cock hackle
Collar hackle: Red game hen hackle.

I put Kate McLaren to the test and she immediately responded in line with the testimonials. And the beauty is, even I can tie up a Kate.

But if you feel your flytying is not up to tying a few Kate McLarens then there's much simpler patterns such as the soft-hackled wet flies that noted author Sylvester Nemes wrote about in his little classic "The Soft Hackled Fly." His patterns were basically just a silk body and a soft hen hackle. Even in early colonial New Zealand Captain G D Hamilton in "Trout and Other Sport in Maoriland" published in 1904 suggested just five flies with his top choice being a "spider" pattern of, brown partridge hackle, hares ear body (sparse) put together with yellow silk. "Very killing when the water is clear and low, among high conditioned and shy trout. Used as a tail fly, this is perhaps the most reliable -- particularly among large trout---."

Tie wet flies sparsely. A general failing with shop-bought ones is over-dressing.

Wet fly fishing works best early or late in the summer season but that's no reason not to fish it mid-season especially just on dark and into the night.

A few pointers.

Cast across the current, and for orthodox right handers hold the rod in the right with fore-finger gently trapping the line against the rod. The left hand holds the line. Let the fly swing with the current. Browns are likely to take in the first few metres of the swing.

"Takes" are usually very gentle, almost imperceptible. With practice and experience you will tighten into a fish on more instinct than feeling a take. The take can be so soft it is like a small piece of weed

dragging the line. Rainbows may take more strongly.

You need to tighten immediately, holding the line with the left hand and raising the rod.

Bright moonlit nights are unproductive not so much for sea-run browns near the surf but especially for resident river fish. Take care not to slap the fly or line on the water even although it's near dark or night. Wear waders otherwise the human scent drifts down putting trout off. Move quietly and softly between casts avoiding crunching stones underwater.

Evening rises are often disappointing now, compared to my teenage years when I recall in the 1950s, dozens and indeed scores of trout rising on a long pool in the Manawatu River by Palmerston North. But there will be trout there. So despite no rising fish, try the little wet fly, especially a Kate McLaren.

Fish wee wets "across and down" during the day too especially on riffles. Even fish it upstream instead of the usual nymph pattern, but in nymphing style. Wee wet fly fishing is subtle, successful and yet a forgotten way.

© The famed Scottish fly - Kate McLaren

Postings From the Website

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

Unsustainable Water Management

"The release of the LAWA monitoring reports for 1727 river and lake sites reveals a national disgrace 82% of monitored lowland lakes are in a poor or very poor condition…

Read more...

Carbon Mining – Short Term Gain, Long Term Pain.

Opinionfrom Pure Advantage There is a new risk to you – the taxpayer – from the government's recent decision to back off from excluding exotic species like pine from thepermanent…

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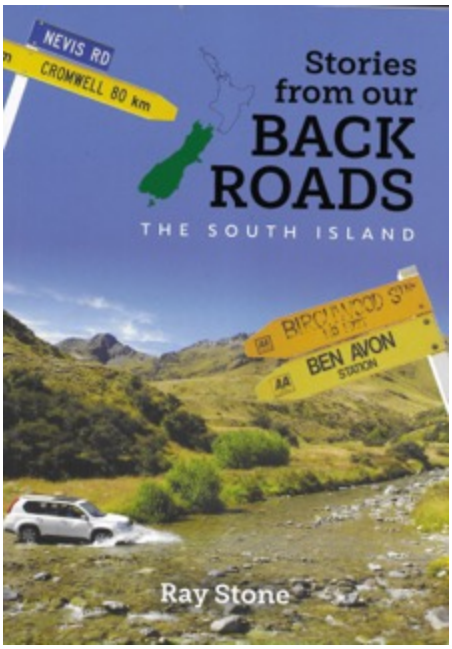

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