



NZFFA September 2021 Newsletter

{name} - Welcome to Your Newsletter

The Three Waters Reform – A disastrous Government response to the 2016 Havelock North water supply contamination?

Opinion piece by Dr Peter Trolove, President New Zealand Federation of Freshwater Anglers

In August 2016, as a result of “loose” government policy from both the National and Labour governments, together with inadequate management of Havelock North’s freshwater supply by both the Hawkes Bay Regional Council, Hastings District Council and poor oversight by the Hawkes Bay District Health Board, at least 5,500 residents out of a town of 14,000 became ill with the waterborne disease campylobacter with 45 residents requiring hospitalization. The contaminated water supply contributed to the death of four people.

[Lessons from NZ's 2016 Havelock North water supply outbreak - Water Source \(awa.asn.au\)](#)

[Havelock North campylobacter study estimates 8320 were infected | RNZ News](#)

The Three Waters Reform Bill and the establishment of the new authority, Taumata Arowai, to oversee freshwater supplies nationally appear to be elaborate attempts to distract New Zealanders from bringing the culpable parties to account;

[Ongoing victims of Havelock North’s water crisis | News | Victoria](#)

[University of Wellington \(wgtn.ac.nz\)](https://www.wgtn.ac.nz)

The Department of Internal Affairs, (the department responsible for oversight of regional councils and the department responsible for developing government policy), has embarked on a radical re-engineering program for New Zealand's freshwater supply services using its Havelock North failures to bundle up many fragmented and often inadequately regulated freshwater suppliers into four large entities distanced from accountable local government management.

While there is no explanation given as to how or why a bigger entity will lead to improved outcomes in terms of safer drinking water, it seems the Department of Internal Affairs has accepted the very general findings of the **frontier economics** report;

[Review of experience with aggregation in the water sector \(dia.govt.nz\)](https://www.dia.govt.nz)

Whether our water supply industry will remain in local or central government ownership or is privatised remains to be seen. What appears certain is that our water supply will be managed on a corporate user-pays model.

The privatisation policies of the Thatcher and Douglas governments simply resulted in asset stripping with hollowed-out hulks such as NZ Rail returning to government ownership while once public assets that could generate a solid income stream ended up in foreign hands.

As we can only live for three days without water, private ownership of New Zealand's water services trading on a user-pays basis would be a gold plated investment. Hopefully, the present government is aware of the backlash that policy would incur.

The aggregation will require a forced takeover of the ownership of our publicly owned water supply infrastructure. Water charges will increase for all. Cross subsidization from metropolitan centres is likely to even out the high costs of remote rural drinking water supplies.

The creation of a new regulatory body is no guarantee that the regulations will be better enforced.

The TV and Department of Internal Affairs online propaganda selling the Three Waters Reform is offensive for both its childish form and its

disingenuous content.

Neither the councils who are being bribed to part with our freshwater assets nor the public that own them are being given sufficient information to determine if the Three Waters Reform involving aggregating New Zealand's freshwater infrastructure for privatisation or management by a state-owned quasi-corporate structure will indeed lead to safer drinking water supplies.

[Three Waters: Big Winners and Losers](#) | [Newsroom](#)

Cantabrians have learned to their cost not to trust central government interference with environmental matters.

The Environment Canterbury Temporary Commissioners and Improved Water Management Act 2010 proved a disaster for Canterbury's freshwater environment that is worsening year on year. Researchers at Otago University predict Christchurch's envied freshwater aquifers could become polluted with excess nitrate within 50 years.

In Canterbury we have learned that all water is connected – from braided rivers to aquifers to spring fed lowland rivers and streams. We have lost our clean drinking water to diffuse pollution from intensive farming. Neither Environment Canterbury nor some massive South Island wide entity could afford to remove nitrate from Canterbury's aquifers.

The most effective regulation is to prevent contamination of water sources in the first place.

Replacing the RMA, Regional Council by-laws and Ministry of Health regulations with monolithic entities remote from consumers run as a corporate model makes sense only to book keepers.

Drinking water services are too important for political grandstanding; they should be thoughtfully regulated, adequately funded and delegated to well-trained and well-resourced professionals.

The Havelock North disaster was a symptom of this country's mismanagement of our freshwater as a whole. It seems more logical to address the cause rather than the symptoms.

Peter Trolove
President
NZFFA

"We scientists don't know how to do that"

"I used to think the top environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and climate change.

I thought that with 30 years of good science we could address those problems.

But I was wrong.

The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed and apathy...

...and to deal with those we need a spiritual and cultural transformation

- and we scientists don't know how to do that."

Gus Speth

Saltwater Flies

"Matching the Hatch" for Kahawai

by Tony Orman

It's an old adage in fly fishing for trout that you must "match the hatch" - i.e. work out not only the particular insect the trout are taking but also the particular phase of the hatching. After several seasons chasing kahawai with the fly rod, I've had several experiences that make "match the hatch" applicable to the saltwater situation and therefore make it imperative to carry a variety of flies.

You see kahawai are not always a push-over. Some days they can be as fussy as trout, just following a fly or lure in and not taking. To appreciate this it's necessary to understand fish are of low intelligence rating. You might say the parallel in is trout fishing with "matching the hatch." The "selective feeding" by trout has nothing to do with cunning but is a reflection of a fish's low intelligence. You might liken it to female derision at husbands' inability to multi-task. Male homo sapiens and fish can only focus on one thing at a time!

So the fish, be it trout or kahawai, home in on one prey available at the time and focus on only that and are therefore oblivious to any thing else. Basically it shows up with the comparative effectiveness between spinning and fly fishing

for kahawai. Apart from the odd exception, the fly far out fishes the spinner.

One evening a few years ago was a graphic example. A friend and I headed down to the mouth, he toted a spinning rod and I the fly rod. We arrived at the mouth and there were six other chaps there - spinning.

In about an hour and a half's fishing, on a small fly tied on a Black Magic saltwater hook I caught 20 kahawai with several good-sized, chunky fish ideal for the smoker, while my friends - an adept spin fisherman - just three metres away had no kahawai takes. Nor did the other six spin fishers catch any.

On gutting the kahawai, I found they'd been homing in on very small bait fish, just two centimetres or so long. The typical kahawai spinner just didn't measure up as an imitation but a small size 2 saltwater fly did. Other times the kahawai may be concentrating on yellow-eyed mullet so a large fly is needed.

Sure, that evening's contrast between success rates was exceptional. However other times I've mathematically worked it out tossing the number spinning into the equation and worked out the fly rod's catch rate is often 600 or 700 percent better!

It goes further than that.

In my book "Trout With Nymph" (1974) I told of the super normal releaser factor. Many years ago a Nelson friend who by profession was a scientist plus a very skilled angler on both trout and saltwater fish, told me animal behaviourists like Lorenz and Tinbergen researched this aspect and concluded basically animals such as fish do not look at the whole object. Instead they see some special feature called the "releaser". When this is exaggerated such as in a fly design it's termed "the super-normal releaser."

Not always do trout feed selectively so on those days a fly with the "super-normal releaser" isn't so necessary. The same with kahawai. Some days they will take almost anything. Other days they can be fussy and finicky.

I usually wear polaroid glasses when kahawai fishing. At times, kahawai will flash at the fly and not take, or they will just follow in, as trout are inclined to do, after the swinging fly. You can see the same with spinners at times - just a big grey shape or two following the lure and not taking. When that happens, it's a signal to make a change, perhaps to a smaller size or a different colour n a bid to incorporate the "supernormal releaser."

Some days when kahawai are fastidious, I've found a change to a blue fly works.

Fly size comes into it too. I normally tie up kahawai flies on a 2/0 but with whitebait runs happening in spring and early summer and the likelihood of kahawai focusing on the tiny fish, I'll have some slim, pale patterns on a size 2 or even 4 saltwater hook.

I like to incorporate eyes on my flies. I figure that a fleeing fish is wide eyed in its panic and you want to ensure your pattern is as life like as possible. Is a duo of prominent eyes on a fly also a "super normal releaser"?

© Kahawai on a fly rod are superb sport. Try it!

Trout Farming 1970s Battle Recalled

by Tony Orman

"The sport of trout fishing belongs to all New Zealanders." That was the first sentence in a chapter entitled "Trout Farming" in a book I wrote back in 1979 entitled "The Sport in Fishing."

Trout farming was a big political issue back in 1972, the year of a general election. National were in government and Labour had been in Opposition benches for a couple of decades. The concept of trout farming i.e. producing trout for sale as food, became government policy.

Now 1972 was probably years before many or most of today's trout

fishers were born, so it's timely to briefly recap events of that time.

I first became aware of the dangers when about 1970, David Pike the field officer for the Hawkes Bay Acclimatisation Society warned me about the concept. So I sat down and wrote to overseas trout authorities in the USA, UK, Australia and some European countries. The messages I received warned of the detrimental effects and the short comings of trout farming.

I learned of others in other parts of New Zealand who were also uneasy or opposed to government's concept of trout farming. John B Henderson, president of the NZ Deerstalkers' Association, was not only a sporting hunter but also a keen and expert dry fly fisherman. He realised that outdoor sports like fishing and hunting are intertwined by that vital common thread of being a public resource and in public ownership. In 1970 he wrote, "Many ---were likewise quick to realise the implications in the proposals to commercialise trout - that here was another case of the 'quick quid' philosophy about to overrule all rational considerations and degrade the sportsman's heritage still further, merely for private gain."

The government's Marine Department suddenly realised opposition by trout anglers was gathering momentum. Government ducked for cover by pushing the bill to a parliamentary select committee. Meanwhile Labour's leader Norman Kirk, himself a keen outdoor sportsman in his younger days no doubt was watching the developments with interest. I chanced to know a Labour MP well and I asked if he could arrange an interview with me. So it was that I met Norman Kirk in the lobby of Parliament. The big man sat down after introductions and said, "Tell me why you're opposed to trout farming."

I did so moving in the course of the 10 minute conversation through the public ownership of the trout resource, the problems with trout farming of organic pollution from farms, of disease outbreaks in the crowded ponds, of its marginally uncertain economics, of incentives to poaching if a dollar value was placed on trout and so on.

Norman Kirk listened attentively and then thanked me for coming to Parliament and said he'd "be in touch."

A couple of weeks later Norman Kirk announced Labour was opposed

to trout farming. Meanwhile the National government introduced the trout farming bill to Parliament and had a stormy passage. I wrote "The National MP for Rotorua Harry Lapwood crossed the floor of Parliament and voted against the bill. — sensationally the vote was tied at 37 all—Only the casting vote of the Speaker of the House National MP Roy Jack saved the government vote."

The battle was on.

I found apart from Hawkes Bay there were others leading the fight in various regions. Stan Thompson in Rotorua, Budge Hintz at Taupo, Herbie Mier in Waimarino, Noel Voyce in Canterbury, Mike Adams in Hawkes Bay and others led the onslaught in their respective regions. Anglers had no other option than to make it an election issue.

I had public clashes in the Hawkes Bay newspapers with Hastings MP and Minister of Lands Duncan McIntyre over trout farming, Save Manapouri and selling public land at Upukeroa, Te Anau to a rich American. The National Party were angry. The local president Stuart Devine bailed me up against the BNZ building in Heretaunga Street and loudly chastised me for making "scurrilous" attacks on his local MP Duncan McIntyre who was loudly promoting trout farming. The National party secretary asked me to his office where over a cup of coffee, invited me to stop my public opposition and join the party and influence National policy from within."

I declined the invitation.

In Hastings the Hastings and District Anglers and Scinde Angling Club campaigned strongly. Election night was a shock result. Hastings MP Duncan McIntyre was thrown out by voters. Taupo swung to Labour as did other regional seats where anglers spoke out. Labour led by Norman Kirk won a landslide victory.

In the post mortems by newspapers, editorials among them the "NZ Herald", referred to trout anglers having spoken loud and clear and identified their vote and trout farming as a strong factor in the government's defeat.

I had made submissions along with many others, to the Select Committee. Quoting numerous overseas fisheries scientist my submissions went to 40 pages and took over an hour to present to the

hearing. Among the experts I quoted was Ben Schley of the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

He said "For some reason or other everybody seems to think that a great deal of money can be made by producing trout for the commercial market—NZ would be making a big mistake in attempting to set up commercial trout production."

Disease was a major concern for Ben Schley. He outlined the disease problems with diseases like myxosoma cerebralis, which had forced commercial farms to close. His warnings were echoed by others. Denmark described trout farming as a "severe attack on the environment" while in Britain, UDN (ulcerative dermal necrosis) had spread through farms and even into the wild.

Another disease IPN (infectious pancreatic necrosis) had swept through trout farms in East Anglia.

As Ben Schley said trout farming is a "capital intensive, high risk, marginally economic venture."

The 1972 election was noted by political circles. Prime Minister in the 1970s and into the 1980s, Rob Muldoon was lobbied by pro-trout farm interests but flatly refused to risk another battle like 1972.

© Prime Minister Muldoon didn't want another fight with the angling public over trout farming

© Duncan McIntyre - shock defeat with trout farming a major factor

A Clayton's Cure - Fencing Rivers

An abridged version from the late Bill Benfield's book "Water Quality and Ownership" published by Tross Publishing, 2017

Around 17 or 18 years ago Fish and Game NZ started raising concerns about dairy run-off into rivers. That concern was proper.

But Fish and Game failed to look at other things that were happening.

When the heat came on, Fonterra the biggest player in dairying, moved quickly to deflect attention by proposing the Dairy and Clean Streams Accord of 2003. It's a text book example of a Clayton's solution - how to maintain and expand intensive agriculture and its serious degradation of rivers while avoiding the real problems.

It involves fencing off river (and lake) margins and banning all animals from waterways.

As an added public "sweetener" for the "green" lobby, the fenced off river margins were to be "planted with natives."

Not only has it been successfully sold to central and local government

but also to Fish and Game and the Green Party.

In the end, the Fish and Game campaign, by settling for fencing rivers, did nothing to stop the huge expansion of dairying in Canterbury.

The only thing achieved was the exclusion of the public and recreational fishers who are Fish and Game license holders, plus of course, a few animals.

By focussing on dairying, it has deflected attention from the other major polluters, a classic case being the 2009 report on the Manawatu by the Cawthron Institute which rated the river as the dirtiest in the Western world and pointed the finger firmly to dairying.

In fact, the Manawatu River had to put up with partially treated sewerage and untreated storm water from towns ranging from Eketahuna village (450 people) to Palmerston North city (88,000) scattered through the huge catchment. The river and its tributaries carries industrial burden from breweries, pharmaceutical works, milk processing plants and freezing works and there is also forestry and council bulldozer operations in the river bed contributing to silting.

The price is being paid for dirty dairying. The rivers are being fenced off!

While fencing off rivers and banning all stock sounds good in principle, the reality is quite different. The river/streams are no longer subject to browse and the riparian strip quickly becomes overgrown with blackberry, broom, convolvulus, gorse and even poisonous tutu. Not only does the river become inaccessible—but riparian planting does nothing to stop most pollution entering the waterway.

The fact is riparian planting does nothing to stop nitrates from entering the waterways.

River margins can be managed better. It just requires a more focused system of river management.

There is certainly a case that where there is no intensive dairying,

river banks should be left as in near as natural unfenced condition as possible. Thereafter the issue is stock. Stock like sheep, goats and horses at the density of traditional farming, are not the problem.

Cattle can be a different issue. Where cattle densities are high and stock receive supplementary feed from offsite, they should be kept far from the river - it could be 50 metres or more. In such situations the ideal would be to significantly de-stock the land.

If fixed 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 so as to let sheep through.

As an example of corporate posturing by big dairying to take the heat off, the fencing of rivers programme has been a stunning success. The only trouble is that it has done nothing for the rivers. It has allowed their continued degradation, often unseen and for most purposes, particularly recreation, rivers become no longer accessible.

And to repeat as Mike Joy's "Polluted Inheritance (page 34) makes it quite clear, riparian planting does nothing go stop nitrates from entering waterways.

© Bill Benfield - "riparian planting does nothing go stop nitrates from entering waterways."

The Danger Within - Apathy and Inertia

by Andi Cockroft

Fish and Game elections have just taken place. Of twelve fish and game regions, elections only took place in just five.

Why?

Because there were not enough nominations in six of the regions to hold an election.

Elections will be held in Wellington, Taranaki, North Canterbury, Central South Island, Southland and Otago.

Anglers and shooters in other regions just could not be bothered to get involved.

In Northland, there were 8 nominations for 12 seats, Hawkes Bay 11 nominations for 12 seats and West Coast 9 nominations for 12 seats. Auckland, Eastern (Rotorua/Bay of Plenty) had just 12 nominations for 12 seats so no election was required either.

It's evident, apathy is alive and well amongst the country's fish and game licence holders.

However, democracy does not deserve such disservice by people.

Democracy Extinction

History has given rise to a proliferation of quotes about apathy. Robert M Hutchins, an American educational philosopher at the University of Chicago once said "the death of democracy is not likely to be an assassination from ambush. It will be a slow extinction from apathy, indifference and undernourishment."

You can go further back to philosophers like Greek philosopher Plato who said "The price of apathy is to be ruled by evil men."

Apathy is rife. Recent general elections figures have shown a million New Zealanders did not vote or were even too disinterested to register as voters. Those one million are selfish. They do not care about tomorrow and the legacy they leave to their children and grandchildren. They are short-sighted because they only live for today and don't give a toss about tomorrow.

Take a look at recent Fish and Game elections in which the voter turnout by shooters and anglers was woefully low.

Bureaucrats flourish when there is apathy as consequently there is little accountability.

There is the example of the Department of Conservation.

It advocates for massive 1080 poison drops at the expense of native birds and invertebrates. Does DOC care? They may kill rats, initially, that is, but research shows that the rats that survive a 1080 aerial drop, have suddenly a bountiful food supply and accelerate breeding. In 12 to 18 months the exceptionally fast-breeding rats have recovered numbers. The momentum continues and in three to four years rat numbers have soared to four times as before 1080 poisoning. During DoC 1080 drops, insects are killed by the toxin. The poison was first developed as an insecticide. Insects that are food for trout such as cicadas and green manuka beetles are killed. The food supply for trout is diminished. In other words, the carrying capacity of a trout stream or river is reduced. The nett result is falling trout numbers.

Top Research

The excellent research by Peter Trolove on nitrate levels in freshwater has had little or no support from DoC. Nor has DoC publicly supported the Federation's or Fish and Game's advocacy against short-sighted irrigation schemes or river exploitation. DOC seems disinterested in river flows or nitrate levels yet those rivers are habitats for native fish and trout.

Ironically DOC manages the Taupo trout fishery by law. It is also by

law, entrusted to look after native aquatic life. But it stands lamely by, turning a blind eye to the fate of the public's rivers.

That leaves one other option - you.

Do you as a New Zealander care?

Well, the record of the public ever since 1984 (and the advent of Rogernomics) has been one of apathy and disinterest - and yes, selfishness and shortsightedness.

Apathy is a major worry. Consequently, the world has become ruled by top-down, dictatorial, often arrogant governments.

But one country stands as an exception - France. As political commentator Chris Trotter once put it, "French governments are frightened of the French people."

"Any perceived threat to their rights---is met by the French people, with action - on the streets."

Outdoor Issues

In the outdoors, the 1972 New Zealand election - 43 years ago - was a landmark one for action. The National government wanted to destroy Lake Manapouri in the "people's national park" to give cheap, heavily discounted power to a corporate foreign consortium. The people rose up in anger and formed "Save Manapouri."

The government then wanted trout farming. Anglers rose up in wrath. The government did a deal with a rich American to sell public land in Te Anau's Upukerora valley for a luxury lodge to exploit fishing and hunting and lock Kiwis out. The NZ Deerstalkers' Association rose up in wrath.

The 1972 election saw the National government dumped in favour of Norman Kirk's Labour one. Kirk significantly loved fishing and hunting and the outdoors.

The Kirk government banned trout farming, Manapouri was saved

from drowning and the Upukerorora deal collapsed.

Fast forward almost half a century, to 2021.

Chris Trotter ended his recent column with “it would seem the habit of revolution and the knack of frightening governments, are forgotten at the people’s peril.”

Footnote: Andi Cockroft is co-chairman of the Council of Outdoor Recreation Associations of NZ (CORANZ)

Postings From the Website

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

Guide to Growing Vegetables to Complement your Fish and Game

Book Review. “The Edible Backyard” by Kath Irvine. Published by Godwit (soft cover) Price \$50. Reviewed by Tony Orman I’ve never quite worked out why more outdoor chaps don’t get into vegetable gardening at home. It’s sort of...

Read more...

Time to measure Nation’s Well-being on Quality of Life

Opinion by Andi Cockroft, chairman CORANZ

It’s well past time when New Zealand’s economic policy was examined and any shortcomings jettisoned. For example, New Zealand could well consider ditching Gross...

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My Deer Woods and Trout Streams Are Getting Crowded

Opinion by Tony Orman All anglers who fish the Clinton and Worsley rivers must obtain a backcountry endorsement. Only Adult Whole Season, Family, Loyal Senior, Non-resident Whole Season and Local Area licence...

Read more...

Deceitful ESR report (with explanation)

A Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and Fonterra commissioned an investigation by New Zealand Food Safety and ESR finds it is safe to drink nitrate polluted water –...

Read more...

Trout and Rivers Advocacy Urges Rural NZ to Test Water Supplies

All rural households that rely on their own water supplies should get them tested for nitrate levels if that water flows through agricultural land says NZ Federation of Freshwater Anglers (NZFFA)...

Read more...

Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court (and consent Hearings) must be held to account

Opinion by Dr Peter Trolove Rakaia river mouth 2011 Introduction The Ministry for the Environment is presently drafting legislation to replace the RMA (1991) which has been judged not fit...

Read more...

Draconian Fish and Game Restructure Proposals Shelved

(special report) Proposals to radically restructure Fish and Game, which administer and manage trout and salmon fishing and duck and game bird shooting, have been shelved according to a letter...

Read more...

Nitrate Testing Three Years On:

Ecologists 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...

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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.