

FLY LINES



DECEMBER 2025

Guest speaker, Peter Morse

**December Meeting –
On on Tuesday December 2
Commencing 6:30pm**

At the Albert Park Yachting and Angling
Club, 129B Beaconsfield Parade, Albert Park

Our Guest Speaker for this year's Christmas Dinner is Peter Morse, well known Australian Fly Fishing Guide and Author, and highly regarded fly casting expert and teacher.

Peter will be speaking on a fascinating topic - swinging flies from streamers to

dries to soft hackles on single handed rods and two handed rods on rivers big and small. The why, the when and the how: "The swing is the thing but the tug is the drug!"



Peter Morse

Index

Guest speaker, Peter Morse	1
Vice President's Message.....	3
From the Editor's Desk.....	5
Andrew Fuller speaking at our November Meeting.....	7
Ed Herbst's Fabulous New Book	11
Fishing the Alkaline Streams of Monaro	12
The Warrnambool Report	14
A Little Bit About Fly Lines	16
More Wisdom	20
Australian Trout Foundation Leading the Way.....	22
The Monaro Acclimatisation Society	24
Fly of the Month.....	28
VFFA 2025 meetings & other activities	32

THE VICTORIAN FLY FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

VOL. 76 NO.10 - DECEMBER 2025

Organisation No. A0024750J

P.O. Box 18423 Melbourne Bourke Street,
Melbourne 3001

vffa1932@gmail.com www.vffa.com.au

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

John Spragg

Phone: 0407 555 621

HONORARY SECRETARY

Kevin Finn

Phone: 0401 695 414

HONORARY TREASURER

Glen Oliver

Phone: 0412 295 744

HONORARY LIBRARIAN

Bill Jeans

Phone: 0448 967 192

HONORARY EDITOR

Lyndon Webb

Phone: 0488 555 724

Other Council members:

Scott Raggatt 0402 433 450

Bernard Chu 0402 433 450

John Wieladek 0497 673 467

Rod Hirst 0418 477 368

Andrew Fuller 0408 661 324

All material copyright © all rights reserved. No part of the contents of this publication may be reproduced without prior written consent of the publisher. Published monthly by the Victorian Fly Fishers' Association Inc., PO Box 18423 Melbourne Bourke Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3001.

Vice President's Message

... from John Spragg

What happened to this year? The VFFA had a great year with trips to Brumbys, Taupo, Enochs Point, the Donger Weekend, Thorpdale, and Warrnambool, with more planned for next year. Our four Millbrook days were all cancelled unfortunately, due to a lack of water, but that is changing.

We thank Simon Joel for his leadership and great generosity during his presidency. His ability to organise superb speakers for our meetings each month was outstanding.

Thus far having two vice-presidents has really worked well. We are getting things done and sharing the load. We may soon have some news on a new president in the New Year.

We apologise to everyone who has had trouble with our online booking system. This will be sorted by February of next year. We are confident it will be simple and straight forward to book events. There is a lot of work now being done behind the scenes to make our website current, informative and easy for members to access all sections. Many hours of work by volunteers. Thank you Andrew and Scott.

We are very close to having a definitive list of members and some non-members who receive Fly Lines each month. (Presidents of other fly fishing clubs receive an emailed copy of our newsletter, and in return we receive theirs.) For a few reasons we somehow had a couple of lists of VFFA members that did not match exactly, and on occasions some members would be contacted twice for the same thing. But by the end of March we will



John Spragg

have one list! Why wait till March? We are giving time for un-financial members to pay, and are using every contact detail we have to catch up with all members, so we will soon have final correct lists with current contact details.

We also at present have four bank accounts, so Tony, Glen and Rodger will consolidate these so there is just one "official" VFFA bank account.

All of the above may seem a little out of the ordinary, but we have an Association that is almost 100 years old which is run by a volunteer group of people who have used their best efforts to make thing work. And council members change. The first smart phone became available less than 20 years ago, and Windows for the general consumer started with Windows 95 just 30 years ago.

The VFFA has had some members embrace technology, others shun it and some are wary of it. In my opinion the VFFA has been half in the technology age and half out of it (snail mailed Fly Lines as an example). We are now consolidating things and using technology for the benefit of all and keeping it simple. We want to use technology to make it easy for members to “do things”.

Rodger and I and all Council members would wish all members and their families a Merry Christmas and a Safe and Happy New Year.

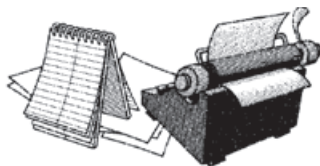
I’m reminded of two men who decided to take up fly fishing. So off they went to Hurleys, The Flyfisher, Compleat Angler and Essential Fly Fisher and bought all the kit they needed: rods, reels, lines, leaders, tippets, vests, waders and boots and of course several boxes of flies. They headed off to the Goulburn River near Thornton, fished all weekend and caught only one fish. One mate turned to the other and said: “Do you realise this one fish has cost us each about \$3,000!” His mate replied: “Thank heavens we only caught one!”

My regards and very best wishes to all our readers.

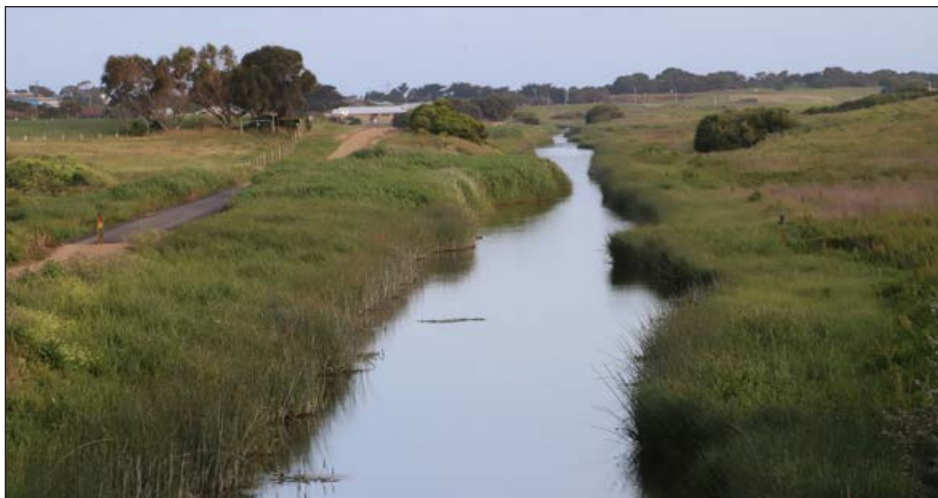


Popular VFFA member Hamish Hughes with a fine brown he had just landed

From the EDITOR'S DESK



... from Lyndon Webb



The lower Merri River in Warrnambool. It looks plain and fairly bland but countless huge trout have been taken from this section

I look into my fly box and think about all the elements I should consider in choosing the perfect fly: water temperature, what stage of development the bugs are in, what the fish are feeding on right now. Then I remember what a guide told me: "Ninety percent of what a trout eats is brown and fuzzy and about five-eighths of an inch long." (Allison Moir: *"A Different Angle: Fly Fishing Stories By Women."*)

Isn't it ironical that the single most critical component in our fly fishing is also the smallest and cheapest. We can kit ourselves out with the best gear available - top of the range rods, lines, reels, waders, polaroids and all the rest, but if the bit of fur and feather at the end of our tippet doesn't pass the scrutiny of our speckled friends, then it's all to no avail. Yes, I know there's heaps more to fly fishing

than just catching fish, but when I last checked it seemed to me that hooking and landing a trout or two was fairly high on the list of criteria for a good day out.

Of course any discussion about the flies we use soon gets us into all that presentation versus imitation stuff, and here Ms Moir has a point - if what we offer is about the right size and the right shape, and the trout are out and about and looking for a feed, then our fly is very likely to at least draw close inspection.

Some years ago the guest speaker at a VFFA meeting was Glen Eggleton, from Tasmania, who told us about the life and times of revered Tasmanian guide Noel Jetson. Glenn had been out fishing with Noel on one occasion, and he asked

Noel how he had got on. Noel replied: "I caught nine."

"What did you get them on?" was Glenn's obvious inquiry. "I got one on a Red Tag, one on a Royal Coachman, one on a Royal Wulff, one on a Black Spinner, one on an Orange Quill, another on a Nobby Hopper I just want you to know that it doesn't matter what you fish!" Glenn went on to say that Noel had told him that countless times, and demonstrated to him repeatedly that he didn't care what he put on the end of his line. He usually fished a Red Tag, but it didn't really matter what he put on - he still caught fish with it.

Now there's a statement that will draw plenty of lively discussion at our next meeting. I recall fishing the Liffey River in Tasmania some years ago when I came across a typical little river trout rising regularly at the top of a pool. I had a size 14 Royal Wulff on my tippet, which I drifted ever so carefully, and ineffectively, over that fish two or three times. He studiously ignored it but kept rising anyway. So I changed my fancy Royal Wulff for a rather tired looking Red Tag and then made a dreadful cast that plopped the fly down well wide of my target. As it landed the trout charged across the pool and leapt on my fly as if

he'd been waiting for it all week. So make of that what you will.

A few weeks ago I was hunting through some old copies of our newsletters and came across the following intriguing little tale. (And I hope your school French isn't too rusty. As a help the French term for 'fly' is 'mouche', and 'Le' goes before male nouns and 'La' before female nouns.)

Apparently an English fly fisher was holidaying in France and decided to hire a guide to take him on one of their top trout streams. The angler and guide duly arrived at an attractive stretch and the angler commenced casting. But nothing much happened - no rises, no takes. Then the Englishman suddenly spotted a lone bug some distance away fluttering across the surface. He pointed excitedly, and in an effort to impress the guide, exclaimed: "Le mouche! Le mouche!" The guide shook his head and corrected the Englishman: "Non Monsieur - La mouche! La mouche!" The Englishman stared hard again at the bug, which was now even further away, and shook his head, declaring: "You French guides truly have the most incredible eyesight!"

On that note it's time I finished.

Tight lines all.



*This is the upstream section of the lower Merri shown on the previous page.
This section too has produced some very large fish*

Andrew Fuller speaking at our November Meeting

(Our November meeting was at The Flyfisher store in South Melbourne, where the proprietor and VFFA Council member Andrew Fuller spoke about eyewear for anglers. Here is the text of his talk.)



Andrew Fuller speaking at The Flyfisher at our November meeting

Good evening everyone, and thanks for coming along.

Tonight, I want to run through something simple but hugely important for us as anglers — sunglasses. Not just what we sell in the shop, but what actually helps

you keep fishing well as your eyesight starts to change.

I turned 40 this year, and it hit me pretty quickly that ageing eyes need a bit of help. I saw an optometrist recently and learned a heap, so the timing's perfect for a chat about eyewear. A lot of this will be familiar to some of you, but if anything sparks a question, sing out.

Let me start with lenses.

Glass lenses are still the premium option — not just in price, but in clarity. The moment you put on a proper glass lens, the difference is unreal. That said, polycarbonate and Trivex lenses have come a long way, especially in the sub-\$300 range. But once you're above that price point, you're generally looking at glass — unless you have a strong prescription. In that case, sometimes you simply can't get your script into glass, and



A contemplative Andrew reflecting on the need for quality Polaroids when searching for feeding and active trout



For many members the VFFA November meeting was our first time in the well-equipped and well-supplied Flyfisher store



you'll end up in Trivex or polycarbonate whether you like it or not.

Right now, the two big hitters in glass are Costa Del Mar and Smith Optics. They're huge in the US fishing world. Smith, in particular, have a fly fisher heading their product design, and it shows. They were the first to release a 40% light-transmission low-light polarised lens, which is still the lightest properly polarised lens on the market. If you spend your time looking into shadows, or you're out on cloudy, broken-light days, that lens is a genuine game changer.

Guides like Phil Weigall, Kiel Jones, and Scott Xanthoulakis wear that low-light lens for good reason — it works in about ninety percent of Aussie flyfishing situations. If we could choose blue-sky

days every time, sure, you might pick something darker. But we don't get that luxury.

Now, as your eyes age, more light coming in seems to help. Like turning a light on in a dim room. For younger eyes though, brown-based lenses still shine, especially in bright sun — shark fishing on the Great Lake, or flats fishing in Hinchinbrook or Weipa. Every saltwater guide I know wears brown, but I personally opt for a yellow base lens.

If there was one lens that tries to do it all, it'd be the brown or yellow photochromic lenses from Smith — glass lenses that darken or lighten as conditions change. They adjust by around 10% in visible light, which isn't heaps, but it's clever engineering and enough to make a difference.

Costa do something different again — they've worked hard on glare. They even offer removable side shields, and their frames are superbly built. That's why we stock both brands: Smith for the low-light lens options, Costa for build and fit.

For prescription eyewear, the best synthetic material is Trivex — far clearer than polycarbonate. If you're paying serious money for prescription sunglasses, double-check you're actually getting Trivex.

Most frames come out of Italy or France, but the lenses — especially the fishing ones — are usually ground in the US. Smith's heritage was in snow sports originally, then surfing, and now fishing. And one thing to note: the frames are the cheap part. The lenses are where the cost is. Spotters still do prescription glass here in Australia, and I do like them, but the lenses aren't as advanced as these larger companies.

Smith also do something clever with their glass: the edges are thinner than the centre to reduce peripheral distortion. Because when you look through thick glass on an angle, it bends light. Smith eliminate that. It's one of those little one-percenters you only notice once someone points it out.

Both Costa and Smith use two layers of glass with the polarising film sandwiched between. They also add coatings for scratch resistance and to reduce internal reflections. Hydrophobic coatings make cleaning much easier with just freshwater.

Speaking of cleaning — don't use tissues. Every optometrist will tell you that. If there's salt on the lens, splash freshwater first. And look for frames with good airflow to reduce fogging — vents, thinner arms, anything that stops moisture building up.

Lens colours matter too. Low-light lenses, bright-light lenses, and the photochromic ones that attempt to handle all conditions. When I saw the optometrist myself, I learned I'm slightly short-sighted — which is probably the worst one for fly fishing, because you want to see a long way into the water. Long-sighted anglers typically only struggle up close, tying knots. That's where flip-down magnifiers are brilliant — clip them to your Polaroids and you'll see your tippet and fly perfectly.

If you wear a prescription full-time, you can also use polarised fit-overs (Vistana or Vision 4X4 are common). They're affordable, but being polycarbonate, they're not as clear as glass.

Optometry itself is pretty incredible. The amount of tech involved in getting your eye to focus perfectly on the retina blew my mind. We can get Spotters made to prescription, or you can get measured up locally for Costa or Smith prescription

lenses. Some optometrists do one brand but not the other, so you may need to shop around.

If you use contact lenses, you open yourself up to being able to wear whatever the best polaroids are. It's the best solution.

If it means spending a bit extra on good glass lenses to see fish, I'd take that deal every day of the week — even with the tiny chance of cracking a lens. The clarity and scratch resistance are miles ahead of synthetics like polycarbonate.

But even with the best lenses in the world, some days your eyes just aren't going to do what they used to. And that's okay — because there are some brilliant little gadgets out there now that make life a whole lot easier.

One of the best is the new Talweg Fly Roost. If you struggle threading tiny flies, this thing is a revelation. It's got magnets that hold your fly steady while you poke your tippet into a built-in "funnel" that guides the line straight through the hook eye. Once the line's through, the magnet swings the fly onto a little hook on the tool, and from there you literally twist the device to tie a blood knot. After a bit of practice, it feels like cheating in the best possible way.

And if your eyes are really cooked — to the point where sight-fishing feels like a younger person's game — then it's time to get smart about how you fish. There are so many techniques in flyfishing that rely on feel, not vision.

Think streamer fishing lakes with different sink rates and varied retrieves, swinging soft hackles, Loch-style drifting, washing-line set-ups.

All of these techniques are incredibly effective styles that don't require 20/20 vision — in fact, sometimes having less

visual distraction makes you tune in much harder to what's happening at your fingertips. That heightened sense of feel can let you detect the tiniest takes, the slightest bumps, the moments you would have missed when you were too busy trying to see everything.

So if you're sitting there thinking your eyesight is holding you back, don't. In many cases, these techniques are not only easier — they're often the most productive. Your flyfishing journey isn't ending because you can't see as well as you used to.

It might actually be just getting started.



A trout taking dries off the surface in a popular Tasmanian lake



A freshwater lake in one of Melbourne's Eastern suburbs. This lake is stocked with small rainbows at the beginning of school holidays, and then it is heavily fished

Ed Herbst's Fabulous New Book

Ed Herbst lives in South Africa. He is very prominent in the South African fly fishing and trout fishing world and is a regular contributor to their quite extensive fly fishing literature.

Ed has just completed writing a truly superb book on all aspects of fly fishing for South African trout (or indeed on trout anywhere), and as he is a regular reader of our monthly *Fly Lines* has donated a copy of his book to our VFFA library.

Ed's book has already collected a number of very enthusiastic reviews. It is described as "the most authoritative book on small stream fly fishing ever written."

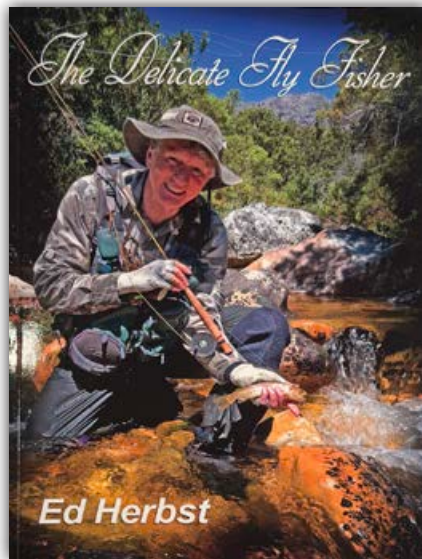
A US reviewer describes it as "... an incredible book that brings together an

exceptional mind and over 50 years of fly fishing experience to deeply analyse trout behaviour and how to catch them effectively. The fly tying sections are truly outstanding — they've completely transformed the way I tie and present flies, with unbelievable success on the water."

It truly is a great read, packed with heaps of advice and guidance.

The book is available from Amazon in paperback and Kindle form.

It will be in our VFFA library early next year (as soon as your editor has finished culling it for information).



Fishing the Alkaline Streams of Monaro

Reflections on a Recent Trip to the Nimmitabel Region

... from Trevor Stow



Trevor Stow is a very active VFFA member living in Bairnsdale. He frequently fishes the lakes and rivers in southern NSW (the Snowy Mountains), and usually very successfully

Recently I spent several days fishing the alkaline streams in the Snowy Mountains, specifically around the Nimmitabel area. The rivers and the fishing experience here can be quite variable. While much of Victoria and New South Wales has enjoyed abundant spring rainfall, this particular region has missed out, largely due to its location in the rain shadow of the Kosciuszko Ranges. As a result, it tends to receive less of the westerly rain, relying instead on East Coast lows - those intense rain events or even cyclones that originate in Queensland and travel down the east coast, eventually making landfall in southern NSW and East Gippsland. These systems have the potential to bring heavy rainfall, but with the cyclone season yet to commence in the tropics, the area remains relatively dry.

Consequently the streams are running low, and during my visit the water temperature was a warm 20°C - quite high for mid-November. However - there is a silver lining. The fish populations seem robust. Most of these alkaline streams suffer from poor natural recruitment, so they depend greatly on the stocking efforts of the Monaro Acclimatization Society, whose work is truly commendable. While fishing I saw numerous brown trout in the three to five pound range, which was most encouraging.

Mayfly Season and Changing Conditions

This period is the prime season for mayflies. As the weather continues to heat up in the coming weeks, the mayfly



Another impressive brown trout caught by Trevor in the Nimmitabel area

hatches will decrease sharply, and as a result the fishing is likely to become more challenging. Generally the fishing shuts down from early December until autumn, when water temperatures start to fall. At this time of the year, grasshoppers and terrestrials come into their own.

Access Challenges

Another challenge in this area is access. Many farmers own to the middle of the river under old titles, and they are very protective of their properties and are sometimes reluctant to provide access to the rivers. Local knowledge is a valuable asset here.

Recommended Flies for the Season

During my time on the Monaro alkaline streams I have found that certain fly patterns produced consistently good results. The Parachute Adams, tied in size 12, proved to be very effective. Additionally, Hubert's nymph - the Bismarck in size 14 - was another standout choice. While Black Spinners in size 12 are typically the preferred fly at this time of year, the absence of many natural spinners meant that the fish readily accepted the Adams pattern.

Approach to Fishing These Streams

Success on these rivers relies heavily on a visual approach to fishing. Casting blindly is seldom productive. You can leave your Euro rod at home. Instead, it is important to locate your target fish, carefully stalk it, and then deliver a well-placed cast well ahead of its anticipated path. This method increases your chances of presenting the fly naturally and enticing a strike.

Good fishing.



One of Trevor's well-filled fly boxes

The Warrnambool Report

... from Peter Whitelaw (with a few lines added by John Spragg)

A big thank-you to Hugh Maltby for being the co-ordinator of this event. Around a dozen VFFA members journeyed to Warrnambool. Once there we really enjoyed our stay. There was a gale blowing when we arrived ('Windy Warrnambool'), so very few members ventured out onto any of the rivers in the area. But pizzas at Bojangles that evening, washed down with the appropriate hydration fluid, was enjoyed by all.

On Saturday morning we assembled at Jim and Trish Blakeslee's superb property on the Merri River just North of Warrnambool, where we were divided into groups and Warrnambool fly fishing club members kindly acted as our guides.

My small group set off with John from Warrnambool Fly Fishers as our guide to the Quarry site on the Mt Emu Creek, not far upstream from the Hopkins Falls (we needed permission to enter the property). Peter Whitelaw watched the others slowly donning their fishing gear and discussing the opportunities as the 40 km/hr winds and heavy rain descended upon us. Peter was a bit quicker than the others and tied on a black woolly bugger with a bead. We stumbled down to the creek and quickly found a position just below a very large pool with an edge of rapids and a bubble trail.

Peter claims he did his usual clumsy cast, then another, and then a really good one (with the wind at his back). As expected, the rod bent and he thought he had his usual weed-fish or stick-fish and would probably lose another fly and some tippet. But a sudden thrashing in the water suggested he needed to raise his rod and apply some line management (which Hamish had taught Peter at Enochs Point),



Peter Whitelaw with an impressive 3 lb brown caught during the VFFA annual trip to Warrnambool

then to pull a healthy brown trout out onto the grass (estimated by friendly experts at about 3 lb). John verified the catch with a photo before Peter released his slippery friend.

We all tried a number of other locations, including the junction of the Mt Emu Creek with the Hopkins River, but the weather and the seeming absence of fish beat us. Peter's catch was the only one of the weekend. My advice to others – be first to the obvious most likely prospective location before others spook the fish, and hope to have a heap of luck.

That night Jim and Trish Blakeslee opened their house for us all. First of all we enjoyed Jim's famous sausage rolls, and I must say this ex-Californian has learned a

lot from living here. I do not recall eating a better sausage roll anywhere. We were then treated to a fine barbeque with all the trimmings, and deserts that made us forget the crummy weather. The night was the highlight of the stay. Jim and Trish and the Warrnambool club members hosted a wonderful evening.

The VFFA team comprised of Hugh Maltby our fearless leader, Tony Mitchem, Bernard Chu, Peter Whitehead, Ray Goddard, John Kenfield, Richard Kos, Rick Dugina, Hamish Hughes, Charles Hollebone, Jonathon Meyers and John Spragg (a goodly team including some

highly skilled fly fishers, but the local trout just didn't like the look of our flies).

We greatly enjoyed meeting again with the friendly Warrnambool Fly Fishers and their partners and greatly appreciated their guidance and hospitality.

The opportunity provided by the Warrnambool members and the Blakeslees for this weekend is truly remarkable and to be commended. The weather was crummy, and although all of us apart from Peter caught do-nuts, the hospitality and comradery made it a truly memorable weekend. A special thank-you again to Jim and Trish.



*Another view of Sutton Lake in Rowville.
This lake has produced a small number of very large trout in recent years*

A Little Bit About Fly Lines

... from Mike Stevens



A superb photo taken by Mike Stevens in Tasmania, the Australian state that has the best trout fishing – in countless rivers and stillwaters

Fly lines tend to be the poor relations when it comes to putting together a fly fishing outfit. Many are eager to get their hands on the latest and greatest when it comes to fly rods, often driven by the glowing descriptions – either from the rod manufacturers, or a retailer, or a sponsored guide or user. And the online opinions can be glowing or terrible. Make no mistake though - most rods are very good.

Once the new rod has been purchased though we then need to choose a sexy-looking reel to attach to it. Then with less thought than there should be, we ask the dealer to provide an appropriate line and leader for the outfit. This is not a decision we should take lightly as the LINE has a huge impact. In some cases you will end up with an appropriate line for the job, but there are many occasions, or I think most, when anglers are fishing with the wrong line for them and their situations.

Rather than choose a rod, then a reel, and finally a fly line, a better approach may be to start by thinking about how you predominately fish. Selecting a fly line should firstly be based on the size and weight of flies you will use, the target species of fish, how we should present those flies (wet or dry, aggressively or delicately, quickly and at distance, or close) and what the environment is like where that fish is to be found (freshwater, saltwater, obstacles or no obstacles, hot or cold climate, wind or no wind, moving water or still water, shallow or at depth). Anglers also need to make an honest assessment of their level of casting skill (length of line which can be carried, ability to cast in the wind, etc).

The mass of the fly line is what tows the fly. A light line, say a 2 weight, will not tow a heavy 2/0 Clouser, but you can cast a size 18 fly with a 10 weight. Consequently, a 6 weight rod, or heavier, is better once weighted flies, such as wets,



Top fly lines come in these packages

big hoppers and bigger nymphs are being used under dries. It is all connected.

Once you have identified the primary fishing you will be doing and the weight of the line which will do the job, then you should look at both a fly rod and reel that are appropriate for the line and the type of fishing you will be undertaking.

Let's consider the characteristics of a fly line that affect its performance and how these characteristics relate to the above line selection criteria.

Fly Line Core

The breaking strength of the line (relevant for the size and aggression of the target

species) and also the amount of line stretch (relevant for detecting unseen takes and also for avoiding break-offs when setting hooks in large, fast-moving fish). The core strength can be anywhere from 15 to 100 pounds. For trout fishing it is typically 20 or 30 pounds. Lines that stretch and lines promoted as non-stretch both have advantages in certain situations.

Fly Line Coatings and Density

The fly line coating used will determine whether the line is a floating line, a sinking line, or a floating line with a sink-tip, as these coatings are used to change the density of the line. Whether a line floats or sinks is important to ensure that

the fly is presented at the depth in the water column where the target species will be found. As an example a floating line would be used to target fish which are to be found feeding at or within a few feet of the surface, whereas a sinking line would be used to get down to fish below these levels. Sinking lines can be obtained with various sink rates to get the fly down a small amount (e.g. intermediate lines) or a lot (very fast sinkers).

Note that sinking lines come in three types, these being “standard” sinking lines that sink in a U shape where the whole line supposedly sinks evenly, then “parabolic” lines where the belly of the line sinks quicker than the tip (and fly), and “uniform” sinking lines which sink in a relatively straight line (with the fly sinking the furthest). The uniform lines can give better take detection.

Sinking lines can be easier to cast than floating lines as they have smaller diameters (for a given line weight), but then are more difficult to get out of the water to commence a new cast. Most of the line needs to be retrieved before false casting can commence. The line coatings will also have an impact on line flexibility, along with temperature which is important when considering whether your target species will be found in the mountains or at the equator at sea level. The coating materials also have varying degrees of resistance to abrasion, with the stiffer coatings (tropical lines) generally being more resistant to wear. But note that if tropical lines are used in colder climates then line “memory” (coiling) can become an issue.

Fly Line Tapers

There are two basic line taper types that are the most common - **Double Taper** (DT) lines, which generally have a short taper at each end connected by uniformly

thick line between these tapers, and **Weight Forward** (WF) lines which are made up of a thicker “head” at the front (fly) end, and then a thin running line at the back (reel) end. The “head” is usually comprised of a front taper, a relatively short belly, and a rear taper. Each of these head components plays a role in how the line behaves. For example, long front tapers with small tip diameters dissipate energy and result in gentle fly presentations (thus, good for small dry flies), whereas short front tapers and/or large tip diameters result in aggressive line turnover which is good for heavy/bulky flies and casting into the wind.

If an angler is using an aggressive front taper but needs a more delicate presentation a simple adjustment is to use a longer tapered leader which has the effect of extending the front taper. Generally, the belly in the head of the line is where the greatest mass is, and the larger the belly the more energy can be stored. This can be more akin to those old shooting heads. In some cases these Weight Forward lines are good for longer casts, but may not be very delicate in fly presentation.

Longer rear tapers help smooth unrolling of the loop when casting. In addition, long heads facilitate roll casting and mending at distance, but require more casting skill for longer line carries, whereas shorter heads are useful when casts must be made quickly to faster moving fish. A useful rule of thumb is that the maximum head length of a line being used should be about the length of line the angler can comfortably carry, as any more will be wasted. Generally speaking, head lengths vary from about 35 feet to 60 feet, with a huge variety of tapers and designs. These variations are all designed to suit different situations. More on this later.

Some anglers prefer **double taper lines** because when one end wears out the line can be reversed and then it can continue to be used. It is nonsense really, but for me the advantage of a double taper is that in casting you can hold a lot of line in the air. I don't see them as the best option though, as there are good Weight Forward lines with very long heads that are better.

Fly Line Weight

Fly lines are classified by 'weight' according to a standard established by the American Fly Fishing Trade Association (AFFTA), and it refers to the weight of the first 30 feet of the line (excluding the tip). For example, if the first 30 feet of a line weighs 160 grains (regardless of whether it is a floating, sinking, sink-tip, DT or WF line) it is classified as a '6 weight line', and thus is labelled DT6F, WF6S or WF6F/S, etc.

This information is useful when choosing a rod to cast this line. A good starting point for a 6 weight line would be to look at a 6 weight rod for this line, although if the caster has sufficient skill almost any fly rod can be made to cast any line. It is worth noting that some fly lines are deliberately made heavier than their AFFTA rating to facilitate rod loading at shorter fishing lengths and for the turnover of heavier flies e.g. Scientific Anglers MPX (a half size heavier) and RIO Gold Max (a full size heavier). Heavier lines are usually needed for successful turnover of heavy/bulky flies and are useful when casting in strong winds because they are not blown around so easily. Some manufacturers' sinking lines are also overweighted by two lines, so make sure you read the box.

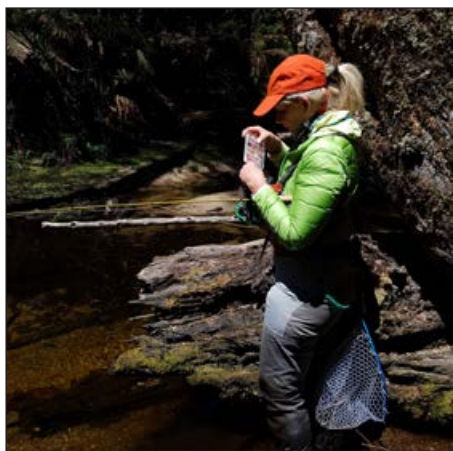
Fly Line Texture

Lines are available today with or without textured coatings in some cases,

depending on the model the angler chooses. The purpose of texture is to reduce the line's contact area with the rod guides, thereby reducing friction and improving shootability. The only downside of these finishes is that they can be noisy. Bruce Richards, fly line designer for over 30 years for Scientific Anglers, says textured lines never need cleaning, so will remain more slippery forever. Richards, a highly regarded fly line designer is now retired, and was and still is highly regarded.

Fly Line Colour

Lines are available in a wide range of colours and there is some division of opinion as to whether bright lines spook fish. There is no doubt that it is easier for anglers to see where their cast is going with a brighter line. I think line flash is probably more significant than colour, although if you go to New Zealand the guides will probably not talk to you if you have a bright line. There are new Scientific Angler lines with clear floating heads. Maybe it is a marketing idea, but if it works it is well worth a try.



Mike Steven's wife Jules is a highly skilled fly fisher and a member of the Australian Women's Fly Fishing Team which has represented Australia in recent international fly fishing championships

More Wisdom

... from Mike Stevens

I recently wrote a few basics about fly lines. Here are some more things to consider when fly lines are being selected.

Can you cast?

Are you after presentation or casting big nymphs under bobbbers?

Are you mending line for drag free drifts on rivers?

Are you casting for distance – bank fishing a lake with big flies?

Does your rod have a fast, moderate or slow action?

Do you want fast pick up and delivery?

(And remember - more expensive lines will generally last longer.)

Let's look at a few dry fly line characteristics and what may suit you best in common fishing scenarios. A good line won't make you a good caster - a casting lesson will work better than an expensive line.

Trout flies are generally not large (either dry or wet) and would be comfortably handled by a 6 weight line. However, there are many Weight Forward line tapers. You will need to think about what fishing you will do most, and the types of rods you are using.

Rod characteristics:

I will use Sage as the first example. You pretty much can't overweight a Sage rod. They have always been proud of making 'fast' rods and loading them to cast often means anglers go up a weight in line. So using a 7 weight line on a 6 weight rod is common.

Sage own RIO, and the RIO Grande lines were one line overweight – so a 6 weight RIO Grand is actually a 7 weight line. These work well on 'fast' rods, but really the rod is a 7 weight but with 6 weight written on it. Scientific Anglers and Airflo do the same with some lines.

Now take a softer rod – often called a Classic, but going to the extreme you could look at cane or fibre glass. If a Sage is fast, then these are slow. And you really don't want to overweight them.

Let's look at a few popular lines, and we will go with a 6 weight line as a reference, which should weigh in at 160 grains at 30 feet. These are floating lines. Perhaps we might look at sinking and saltwater lines in the future.

Scientific Anglers **Infinity** lines - Infinity referring to the taper only. It is a Weight Forward line with a long head of 50 foot. (Sorry about the Imperial measurements, but fly lines follow US conventions). The weight for 30 foot should be 160 grains, but it is in fact 175 grains. And extend this to 50 feet, the length of the head, and you are casting the equivalent of a 9 weight line. Make sense? Not really, but a long head allows you to hold more line in the air, and the long overweighted head lets you turn over big flies and nymphs under dry flies and indicators. It is also probably the biggest selling line in the world. It loads fast rods really well, but is not a line for delicate presentations or moderate and slow action rods.

Scientific Anglers - **MPX** line. The MPX line is one of my favourites. It has a short head at 38 feet; is half a line heavier at 30ft and 175 grain, and is the same as the

Infinity, but only at 30 feet. Its full head weight comes in at 210 grain.

Because the head is shorter it is difficult to hold a lot of line in the air, but it is a great wade polaroiding line as you can cast it short or shoot it long – and both very quickly. It also has a few cane rod supporters, as once past the head it is only running line and thus there is not much weight being added. I am quite happy using a 5 weight MPX on my 6 weight Sage R8.

Scientific Anglers - **Trout Expert** line. This is a beautiful presentation line for dry fly fishing. It is true to weight and at 30 feet is 160 grains – exactly what it should be. Its head weight is 340 grains, but that is at 71 feet – the longest head on any regular Weight Forward line. This is a true dry fly line, and competent anglers can hold the full 70 feet in the air. It does not feel like it is loading the rod because of the very long progressive taper. This is not a line for mugs.

RIO: Gold. If a line can be a classic this is it. It has a mid-length head of 48 feet and at 30 feet it weighs in at 168 grains – just a little over the 160 grain standard. The total head weight at 48 feet is 234 grains, so up around the same as the Scientific Angler's Infinity, but it has more rear taper. This is a super all round line that will work for dries, nymphs under dries, and small wets and has good mending capabilities.

RIO: Gold Max. A new line from RIO that replaces the RIO Grande which was very popular. It is a full line size heavier at 30 feet, coming in at 185 grains, has a head length of 38 feet and total head weight of 240 grains. A great indicator, dropper line and for heavier flies. It will load up your fast rod with ease and send the flies into next week. But remember it is not really a 6 weight – that's just what is written on the box.



Jules Stevens fishing a local Tasmanian stream with some very friendly company

If you want to find a line that suits you, your rod and the style of fishing you do, talk to your fly fishing specialist store. There are many more lines than here and it would be confusing to continue with another ten different lines, which I could easily do.

The line is like a car engine, and a good line is more important than the rod you use. Different situations will benefit from different lines.

Can you cast?



Australian Trout Foundation Leading the Way



Stocking rainbow trout in a stillwater – a very pleasing sight for keen trout fishers

The 2025 Spring trout season opened on Saturday September 6, and with all the anticipation of what the new year will bring it is timely to reflect on what has been done to improve our exciting trout fishing, and the rivers and streams in which they live.

The Australian Trout Foundation (ATF) has been working tirelessly for years to develop partnerships with landholders, Catchment Management Authorities and other waterway/land managers to improve the habitat for trout in our beautiful clearwater streams.

This massive effort is bearing fruit! The following statistics demonstrate the scale and impact that this band of volunteers is having:

- 32 riparian projects delivered across 14 rivers;
- Nearly 80,000 trees planted to improve riparian areas;

- 19 in-stream habitat projects in ten rivers, including placement of hardwood logs and large boulders to create greater diversity, refuge and natural recruitment of wild trout;

- Strong partnerships with around a dozen fishing clubs and four Catchment Management Authorities, with many more in the pipeline.

For more details on how to get involved with the ATF's many programs for restoring trout habitat please go to: <https://australiantroutfoundation.com.au/>



The Victorian Fisheries Authority is working hard to ensure our state trout fisheries are well-stocked

Fish Stocking Program Updates from the VFA

The salmonid stocking season has reached the halfway mark with over 750,000 fish stocked across Victoria's waters since March. Victoria received minimal rainfall in 2024 leading to a challenging start to the season, with water levels in many waters remaining significantly low, leaving them unsuitable for stocking until levels increased.

Thankfully, the rain received over the winter months has enabled us to continue our salmonid stocking program pushing us towards to our goal of stocking 1.3 million brown trout, rainbow trout, tiger trout and Chinook salmon into 150 waters by the end of October.

May Stocking Record

In a new record, we stocked over 360,000 salmonids from Snobs Creek this May, beating the historical average ranging

from 150,000 to 250,000 fish – that's 8.6 ton of fish moved in one month!

This included a mix of brown and rainbow trout and resulted in 18 waters receiving their full allocation for the year. Our specially on-grown family fishing rainbow trout were stocked in time for the June /July school holidays.

Within three weeks the Snobs Creek team were able to stock over 36,000 rainbows (5.8 ton) into 71 waterways. Rain-reliant waters with low water levels did not

receive fish, but are scheduled to receive their share in time for the September school holidays. We also had a first-time stocking of 300 on-grown rainbow trout into Expedition Pass Reservoir near Castlemaine, which will receive another 300 prior

to the September school holidays, creating more angling opportunities in Victoria's northwest.

The Monaro Acclimatisation Society

... from David Grisold



*Rhonda Grisold is a fine fly fisher
— as is evident here*

For \$20 per year VFFA members can join the Cooma Branch of the Monaro Acclimatisation Society, which would then give them access to the Bidgee Lodge, which has cooking facilities and very good accommodation at Cooma, and is a great location for members wishing to fish the area.

(Here are some notes from David Grisold on a recent trip to the Snowy Mountains by David and his wife Rhonda.)

Rhonda and I stopped at old Adaminaby, where sadly fishing in the area was very quiet apart from Mount Selwyn Three Mile Dam.

We had recently joined the Monaro Acclimatisation Society Cooma branch,

so ventured down to meet their secretary, Peter Gibson. Peter turned out to be a wealth of knowledge, and was very helpful. The MAS is having real problems getting trout stocked back into some rivers and dams in the area, with the government delivering a real headache for trout anglers.

VFFA members can show their support by buying a \$20 YEARLY MEMBERSHIP. That also gets you the use of their clubrooms and accommodation on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River, just five minutes out of Cooma.

In Cooma you are situated in the middle of trout heaven - thirty minutes to Adaminaby and Lake Eucumbene and all it has to offer in fly fishing, and twenty minutes to Nimmitabel and its wonderful rivers, or 35 minutes to Lake Jindabyne and the rivers in that area.

Rhonda and I had a great week exploring and fishing new waters, so in a way I was happy that the waters we had planned to fish were quiet.

To join the MAS Cooma branch contact Peter Gibson, the MAS Cooma branch secretary, on 0425 211 313, or email - petergibson@petergibson.com.au

So members - please join and thus help the Monaro Acclimatisation Society preserve trout in the snowy mountains and Monaro area.

They need your membership.

Cheers, Choco



A superb looking and sizeable brown trout



Well done again Rhonda – another fine rainbow!



Mark Weigall provided this great photo of a small team of his friends fishing in New Zealand some years ago



When suburban lakes are stocked with trout whole families can become part of the action



**We aren't the oldest shop
around - so we try harder.**

- and our core staff have over 100 years
of fly fishing experience. So we can help.

PRICE MATCH - OR CHEAPER

We try and price match, so if you find an
identical 'in stock' item advertised cheaper
elsewhere - it is worth giving us a call.

www.essentialflyfisher.com.au 03 6331 8944

THE FLYFISHER

•THEFLYFISHER.COM.AU•

Since 1967 we've set the standard.
Others came later — we just kept getting better.

With the most vibrant, fish-obsessed team in the country,
a massive range of the world's best gear, and near 6 decades
of helping Aussie flyfishers... we don't need to try.

We just deliver.

Find it cheaper somewhere else?
We don't "try" to match it — we match it. Every time.

211 MORAY ST, SOUTH MELBOURNE
PH: (03) 962 11246

**The VFFA thanks our
loyal sponsors in 2025**



THE FLYFISHER

FLY OF THE MONTH

The Cruncher and the Diawl Bach



These flies were featured in our 2010 March newsletter, but they are great flies – simple to tie and very effective fish catchers. They remain very popular with UK stillwater anglers, and are frequently mentioned in articles in the British fly fishing magazines.

The first is the Cruncher – which is described in the literature as a variation on the pheasant tail nymph theme, being a hybrid wet fly / nymph that has proved very successful on both large and small stillwaters. The Diawl Bach (Welsh for ‘Little Devil’) is also fished as a nymph, and has been described as ‘magic on a hook’. Both flies are very simple to tie in their original form, and both flies have been subjected to an incredible range of variations. Thus we find listed the Red Diawl Bach, the Holographic Diawl Bach, the Picric Quill Diawl Bach, and so on.

Will they work in Australian stillwaters? Our trout are the same species as the trout caught in England, and these flies are made from materials (peacock herl and pheasant tail fibres) that are proven fish catchers. These flies probably do not really represent any particular food items but their appeal is that they look rather like a large number of edible items. So they have to be worth a try.

a) The Cruncher

Materials:

Hook: Wet fly hook, such as the Kamasan B175, sizes 8 – 14, but typically 10 or 12

Thread: Brown 8/0 tying thread

Tail: 6 – 8 fibres from a Greenwell or Furnace hen or cock hackle

Rib: Fine wire – either silver or copper or red coloured

Body: Two or three cock pheasant tail fibres

Thorax: Traditionally peacock herl, but variations include red or orange or green dubbing

Hackle: Greenwell or Furnace or Badger hen hackle,
or (another reference) cock furnace hackle

Method:

1. Wind the tying thread from the eye down the hook shank in close turns, and then tie in the tail fibres. The length of the tail should be the same length as the hook shank.
2. Tie in the ribbing material at this point, and then the cock pheasant tail fibres. Wind the tying thread back towards the eye with close turns to form an even base for the body.
3. Wind the cock pheasant tail fibres towards the eye to form the body, stopping when about three-fifths to two-thirds of the shank is covered.
4. Tie off the cock pheasant fibres at this point, and then wind 4 or 5 turns of the ribbing over the cock pheasant fibres. In winding the ribbing, make the direction of the turns opposite the direction of turns used when winding the cock pheasant fibres, so that the ribbing doesn't bed down and get lost in the cock pheasant fibres.
5. Take 2 or 3 strands of peacock herl and tie them in. Wind them on to form the thorax of the fly, then tie them off, leaving enough room on the hook shank to attach the hackle. (Other references suggest using dubbing of different colours, particularly orange or red, for the thorax, though the original pattern uses peacock herl).
6. Prepare the hackle feather in the normal way, tie it in, and wind on three turns. Tie off the hackle feather, and then use the tying thread to build up a head so that the hackle feather fibres are forced to slope backwards a little over the thorax of the fly.
7. Tie up some more in different sizes, and then go catch some fish.

b) The Diawl Bach



Materials:

Hook: Wet fly hook, such as the Kamasan B175, sizes 10 – 14

Thread: Black 8/0 tying thread

Tail: 6 – 8 fibres from a brown cock hackle

Rib: Medium copper wire (or bright red tinsel)

Body: Peacock herl (option – add red holographic tinsel as cheeks)

Thorax: Peacock herl

Hackle: Brown cock or hen hackle fibres, tied underneath as a beard hackle

Method:

1. Wind the tying thread from the eye down the hook shank in close turns, and tie in the tail fibres. These should be as long as the hook shank.
2. Tie in the copper wire (the ribbing material), and also 2 or 3 peacock herl fibres. Wind the tying thread back to the eye, thus creating an even base on which to apply the body.
3. Wind the peacock herl along the hook shank to form a slim body, stopping about one quarter of the shank length from the eye. Leave the excess peacock herl – don't trim it off at this point as it will be used to form the thorax.
4. Wind the ribbing (4 or 5 turns) over the peacock herl, making the direction of the ribbing turns opposite the direction of turns used when winding the herl, so that the ribbing doesn't bed down and get lost in the peacock herl. Tie off the ribbing.
5. Now use the excess peacock herl to build up a thorax just slightly fatter than the body. Tie off the herl, leaving enough room for the beard hackle. Tie a half-hitch in the tying thread at this point so that it doesn't unravel in the next step.

6. Remove the hook from the vice, turn the fly upside down, and insert the hook back in the vice (thus making it easier to attach the beard hackle).
 7. Take 6 – 8 fibres from the hackle feather, and tie them in behind the eye and on top of the hook shank for the inverted fly (so that when the fly is in its normal orientation the beard hackle is under the eye). Tie these fibres in with a few loose turns of the thread so that the fibres can then be pulled through the thread to get the length of the beard hackle correct – it should be just short of reaching the hook point.
 8. When the length is correct tie some more tight turns of the thread to hold the beard hackle firmly in place, then build up a small head, and tie off the thread.
 9. Again, tie some more up and go catch some fish. Also, check on the websites – as suggested earlier, this fly has a multitude of variations that may well be worth trying.
-



Craig Simpson talking mate Felix onto a good fish

VFFA 2025 meetings & other activities

December 2025

- 2 Tuesday Christmas Dinner – 6:00 pm at the Albert Park Yachting and Angling Club – 129 Beaconsfield Parade, Albert Park, located next to the Kerferd Road Pier. (Parking is free on the north side of Beaconsfield Parade.)
Speaker – Peter Morse

January 2026

- 28 Wednesday First Council Meeting for 2026 – 6:30pm at the Kelvin Club