

FLY LINES



JUNE 2022

Gavin Hurley – our Speaker for the June Meeting

Gavin is well-known to many of us. We have visited his store, Hurley's Fly Fishing, in South Road Bentleigh.

As well as selling fly fishing equipment, Gavin organises fishing trips each year to top locations.

Whilst he has taken groups to the UK, Scotland, Iceland, and Alaska, he now specialises in New Zealand. He has a base in Lumsden and offers single day to five and seven day fully equipped adventures. He also provides Christmas Island bone fishing trips: "the trip that all fly fishers must do at least once in their lifetime".

Gavin will provide members with information and details for each of these trips. He also plans to show us some of his new range of fly fishing equipment



Thursday, June 16,
8:00pm at the
Kelvin Club

and clothing, and will bring samples of his stock for members to check out. He has also agreed to tell us about some local fishing – the trout streams in Western Gippsland.

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Note: This meeting will see us returning to the Kelvin Club.

We would encourage all members to join us for what will be a fabulous evening, but PLEASE note this important change – **members wishing to order a meal before the meeting need to make a booking for dinner by 12 noon on Monday, June 13, by emailing Terry Rogers at terryrogers@bigpond.com and leaving a message.** (New chef arrangements mean that this earlier booking is needed.)

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A South African Stream – Bokspruit in Autumn

Vale Stan Lancaster

Some very sad late news - one of our greatly revered members has just died. Stan Lancaster passed away on Saturday, May 28. Stan joined the VFFA in 1981 and was president in the years 1984 to 1987. A tribute to his life and involvement in the VFFA will be included in our next issue.

Peter Morse Speaking at our May Meeting

Peter spoke at length about his involvement in identifying and fishing for blue bastards – a saltwater species found in northern Australian waters. He then gave a second presentation on casting, including using two-handed rods for trout fishing. In this issue we will give the text of his presentation on blue bastards, and will include his talk on casting and trout fishing in our next issue. Both presentations were superb and drew a lot of interest. They both deserve a complete report.

Peter Morse fishing for blue bastards:

Thank you Chris and David for your very kind words of introduction. And Jenny, thank you for the opportunity to talk here tonight.

Please feel free to ask questions at any stage. I can rip through if you don't ask too many questions, in which case I've got two other talks ready to go.

First is the story of the blue bastards, which is a unique Australian story. I once wrote about them for a US magazine and they were terribly concerned about the word 'bastard'. So I told them the story about the cricket bodyline series in the 1930s, when the Australian captain

was Bill Woodfull. Woodfull appeared at the changeroom door at the Sydney Cricket Ground. He opened the door with Jardine, the English captain, standing next to him. All the Australian players were there and Bill Woodfull said: "All right, which one of you bastards called this bastard a bastard?"

Which sort of gives a good idea of how we use this word in this country. Jerry Siem is the former chief rod designer for Sage. Whenever he sends me an email, he says: "Good day you old bastard. How are you?" So we're making some inroads into the US with our way of thinking.

The story of the blue bastard is a very interesting tale which began on the Fly Life forum in the late 1990s and early 2000s. There was a character in Western



Peter Morse describing the distribution of blue bastards

Australia called Lance Christie who appeared in these forums. He was an administrator in the hospital at Port Samson, north of Karratha. He was also a keen fly fisherman.

Lance posed a question about this blue-coloured fish he was seeing on the flats and he wondered what it was. There was some speculation that it was a Black Spot Tusk fish, and without a better description that was the nearest anyone could get to it. I fished with Lance in Broome. I ran some fly fishing schools for sailfish there in the year 2000, and Lance came to one of them. After the school we drove south to Port Samson, a trip of some 1,500 kilometres, and I spent a few days fishing with him there.

We went out to this island where he had seen these pale blue coloured fish on the sand, and found a perfect incoming tide. He explained that he had seen these fish about halfway along the island and said: "You'll see some rocks. There's a bit of a sand flat and a bit of reef about 200 feet out, and they come in on that patch of sand." Then he said, "I'm going to stay here and catch some queenfish." And he did, so I wandered up to where he'd suggested and sat down. About half an



Peter was well informed on this new species

hour later this shape appeared off the reef and mooched its way slowly onto the sand. I threw a fly at it and it ate the fly and I landed it.

"What is this thing?" At the time we called it a Painted Sweetlip. I wrote an article about it in *Fly Life* entitled 'Sweet Things', because at the time that was what we thought it was and this was the nearest we could get to them.

At much the same time over in Weipa Alan Philliskirk also caught one. He had stopped for his lunch break and was



Our May meeting drew a large audience

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sitting on his boat when one of these fish came mooching around. As he was heading off to Florida later that year to fish for tarpon or permit he decided to practice his casting presentation to flats fish, so started casting to this fish. After 30 or 40 casts it eventually ate his fly. We don't know who was actually first, but these two fish were the first blue bastards to be caught on fly in this country.

As a consequence of the online chat side of the magazine article I wrote they became known as 'blue bastards'. To give just a little bit of information about their distribution and what they actually look like here are some photos. The area of the West Australian coast from Exmouth north to Karratha is for me the red-hot epi-centre of blue bastard fishing in Australia, particularly around Karratha. There is some quite astonishing fishing for blue bastards there. They are probably up through the Kimberley. In fact I know they are there, but the tidal movements are so big and the windows are so small that shots at them a rare.

They are caught across the top of Arnhem Land and the Wessel Islands. Josh Hutchins takes groups there. We caught them in the Wessels in 2004 and 2005.

The Wessel Islands there have beautiful big lee shores and extraordinary fishing. There are actually three island groups there and they all have fantastic blue bastard fishing.

I met a fellow the other day who had caught a blue bastard on Groote Island. It is the only one I know of being recorded there, but there's no reason why they shouldn't be there. We don't know about their distribution down around the Gulf of Carpentaria. They are probably there too, but then they really start again south of Weipa on Cape York. They're certainly up through the Torres Strait Islands, and are certainly found as big fish down the east coast from Albany Island, which is right up the tip through all these offshore



Blue bastards are a powerful and deep bodied fish



Peter's presentation came with a comprehensive PowerPoint file



Attentive listeners

barrier reefs with their good mix of sand and reef flats.

Further south of Cairns there are different species. So what we know is that there are several different species of what were originally thought of as deep water fish, but we now find them on the flats. So their general fishermen's name is mother-in-law fish or Morwong, along with several other quite unflattering names. The guys who fish out of the Swain Reefs off Gladstone catch a lot of similar fish, but they're not the same fish. I'll show you some pictures of them later on. There's a lot of similar fish and they all go into a special bag on those big catch and kill boats and are filleted by the crew. They get dropped into a bag marked 'for the mother-in-law', because they are terrible eating.

True story! We've eaten one. We were interested in what these fish were eating so we killed one and checked its stomach. We then thought, "Well we might as well cook it." It was terrible - like eating rubber. Its stomach contents were a mixture of shell grit, crab claws, prawn shells, all kinds of things. So they're a bottom grazing fish.

So that's a bit about their distribution. Now, what do they look like in the water? There's one there in this photo. You can

see the very blue head. Here is a photo of a hooked fish - it's on the line and the bronze colour comes with stress. When you first lift them out of the water they're a beautiful pale blue, but then they change colour. Here's a freshly caught blue bastard. How big do they grow? We've caught them up to 93 centimetres and the same fish weighed 32 lb. So a pretty solid fish.

Here is a photo of Lance Christie and that's his first blue bastard. The reason we thought it was a Painted Sweetlip was because it has all these lines on its face. The fish we were catching were not in any of the guidebooks, and it took a young bloke from Weipa called Ben Bright, who has a degree in marine science from James Cook University, who said: "Hang on a second. What we're catching and what we're calling blue bastards is not the fish we think it is. This is something else."

Ben was just not comfortable with the fish ID books so he sent samples off to Queensland Museum and they came back a year or so later to say this was a completely new species. The scientific name they gave it in Latin literally means 'Blue Bastard'.

So the scientists had enough of a sense of humour to name it after

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what we fly fisherman had named it, and I think that's absolutely brilliant. I think it's a great contribution to Australian fly fishing history, and I think that's just a great story.

These are a flats fish and they're all about sight fishing, though we have caught them blind casting. But they are a mooching fish and they come in onto the flats on an incoming tide. They love a bit of white sand and they live in the reef during the bottom of the tide. They move in onto the sand very slowly with the incoming tide and feed leisurely.

They will examine and follow a fly for up to 30 to 40 seconds - just following it and looking at it. Ben Bright has seen them blow water onto a fly to see what it does before they'll eat it. And often they'll follow it for 30 feet. You can retrieve your fly right up almost to your rod tip and then they'll just turn away. They're an absolutely fascinating and challenging fish. Sometimes they will scoff the fly straight away.

Some years ago we had Mark Bale who was the International Sales Manager for Sage on a trip here to Australia and we took him up to Weipa to fish with Alan Philliskirk. Pat Levy was there. The tide was starting to come up so we went to Alan's favourite blue bastard flat and we said to Pat, "You've got to get your fly in front of these things, okay? Give them your best cast and then you've got to let the fly sink in front of them. They won't eat the fly mid-water or off the top. It's got to be on the bottom, and you've got to lead them by a metre or two, depending on what they're doing. And then slow strips."

Pat said: "Right, yeah, okay." Anyone who knows Pat knows how lucky he is. He throws his fly and the moment it touches down this thing eats it off the top, making complete liars of us. But that's the only time I've ever heard of that happening.

Most of the time you see this moving grey smudge that can disappear and reappear



This fish is a close cousin of the blue bastard and is found further south, where it is known as a salty bream



The biggest blue bastards are found on the inner reefs and sand flats of the Great Barrier Reef

quite astonishingly for such a big fish. And you've got to get your fly on the bottom in front of them, and then you've got to do what the Yanks call 'feed the fish'. That is, you've almost got to tease them into eating it, but sometimes they'll just pounce on it.

Other times they'll completely ignore it like it's just not there. They're just myopic, or they've been eating toad fish or something. You do a perfect presentation and it's completely ignored. Other times they'll turn on it then turn away, or they'll turn on it and start to follow it. And that's when you try to tease them into eating - you make a couple of strips to take it away from them and they'll accelerate and stop on it. You're feeling for a bite - your instinct is to strike. But you don't feel anything and that's when they might be blowing it. And they'll tail on a fly - they go head down tail up and then they'll start to swim off.

So you give it another strip and they'll come straight back. They will follow the fly right to the tip of your rod sometimes, absolutely mesmerized by it. So you can imagine that for someone who is into sight fishing it's a spectator sport. I'll tell the story a little later about three of us on a boat and two of us watching breathlessly while a friend threw a 70 foot cast into the wind and then had the fish follow the fly for 40 feet before it ate it.

(A question re crocodiles was asked at this stage.) Crocodile and blue bastard habitat overlaps in many places, so yes, wading can be nerve wracking. I've had a couple of close encounters in that part of the world (Arnhem Land). The year was 2007, and I set out to catch 100 species of fish in one year on one rod, and that was a 7-weight. I'd got up to 52 before I lost the rod overboard.

I hadn't caught a barramundi by that stage, and on the next island to the west there was a shallow bay which was completely dried out. There was also a small saltwater creek, and I knew that if I followed the creek up and found a pool that was three or four feet deep, I'd probably find a barramundi. Right at the back of the bay there was a large horseshoe bend and the creek ran up the mangroves on one side, but it would have been 200 metres from the water to the back of the bay as that was how far the tide came in.

I found a pool there and spotted half a dozen little barramundi tails in the pool, so I cast my fly and hooked one on my first cast. The barramundi jumped and a 10 foot crocodile came tail-walking out of the mangroves across the surface of the water. I screamed and ran across the sand, dragging the barramundi flapping across the surface with the crocodile in hot pursuit. Then I then realized that it just wanted the barramundi which I kept dragging away from it. The croc suddenly realised how far it was from the mangroves, so it turned and went back.

A few years ago Jerry Siem from Sage and his wife Diana were out here fishing a creek on the west side of the Great Barrier Reef. We had found a permit flat at the mouth of the creek and on three days running other people fished it and everyone caught permit. On the fourth day it was their turn. The >>>

window was small, so they went in there a bit early. There was a big hole next to the flat and the guide said: "That wasn't there yesterday!" A huge crocodile was waiting in the hole. It had been watching for three days and this was the day, and Jerry and his wife were about to get out of the boat to fish the flat. So you need to be extremely cautious.

Here's a photo of a box of blue bastard flies – crabs and shrimp. They love shrimpy patterns. Almost all these flies are weighted and we fish them using 9 and 10 weight rods. I have a mate who fishes them with a 6 weight using smaller flies and he catches a lot, but they're certainly not like the big ones we get over at Karratha. Sometimes they'll eat crabs. We vary the size and the weight, depending on water depth and speed of flow.

Some flies are Jon Clewlow's, who by the way holds the record for nine blue bastards caught in a day. Ben Bright's flies are just shrimpy-looking things with lots of movement in them. There's a crab fly there spun from deer hair and there's a

bit of a story to that one. I was fishing up there with Tony Ong and we got caught by the tide and were stuck in a hole and had to spend seven hours there waiting for the tide to turn for the water to come back in. But prior to that we'd had a couple of hours of the most fantastic fishing for blue bastards.

Around Exmouth and Karratha wading is fine though the problem there is with bull sharks and stone fish. The area provides some really fantastic fishing, but unfortunately there are no guides in the area.

To finish here is a selection of photos of places having great blue bastard fishing, including especially Karratha and the Great Barrier Reef. They grow really big on the Barrier Reef, with a fish shown here of well over 30 pounds.

So that's the end of my first presentation tonight.

(The second part of Peter Morse's talk will be included in our July issue.)



President's Message

"When I ask casting instructors around the world 'what is the key to a good cast?' they invariably reply, 'smooth acceleration'." (Peter Morse)

"Most fishermen use the double haul to throw their casting mistakes further." (Lefty Kreh)

Undoubtedly the highlight of the month was the visit of Peter Morse, guest speaker at our May Meeting. It was quite special to listen to Peter describe his discovery of the "Blue Bastard", a completely new species of fish, and to share his knowledge of this fish.

He followed this with a distillation of his knowledge of casting, and I have quoted his opening line above. He went on to describe the casting faults with which we are all aware and related these to variations in acceleration. A full account Peter's excellent teaching and explanations on fly casting will be given in our next issue.

The evening was held in the unusual surrounds of the Botanical Art School of Melbourne, a bright, convivial atmosphere. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and that was confirmed by the very positive feedback we have had since.

Simon Joel and I met with management at the Kelvin Club earlier this week and we have been reassured that all the issues which plagued the April meeting have been addressed and they are looking forward to welcoming us back for the June Meeting. One major change for us is they would appreciate earlier notification of numbers. Hence, could all members planning to dine prior to the meeting please notify Terry Rogers by midday on the Monday prior, rather than the Wednesday, as has been the custom in the past. Terry will send details of the June meeting via his usual superb red ink emphasised emails, as he does each month.



Dr David Hooke

The VFA in conjunction with the Australian Trout Foundation recently held their Trout Fest weekend at Eildon for the first time in a while. (Covid!) The VFFA was well represented by your President, Immediate Past President and Simon Joel, who was responsible for organisation and liaison. We had banners, brochures and Kossie! My particular thanks to Kossie (Richard Kos) who set up his vice and materials and demonstrated aspects of fly tying all through the day to scores of curious potential fly fishers. Rick and Jo Dobson were there demonstrating equipment and clothing, and all those with a modicum of casting skill pitched in and helped demonstrate the arcane art of casting. The attendance was down a bit on previous years unfortunately, due to a number of factors: weather, being held out of school holidays, and perhaps lingering Covid reluctance.

The Donger weekend at Omeo as guests of the Bairnsdale Fly Fishing Club was a great success, with nine of our members competing. It was only an untimely >>> equipment failure, notably a

flat battery in the scales, that stood between the VFFA and a resounding win! Congratulations to the BFFC and thank you once again for a great weekend. There is a report on the event elsewhere in this newsletter.

The June 1 trip to Millbrook was oversubscribed within days of canvassing by Terry. This is a reflection of the fine fishing, expert guiding and excellent value of this event. Keep an eye out for our September visit if you missed out this time.

Our winter activities commence next week, just as this newsletter will be hitting your in-box or mailbox.

The first fly tying demonstration for this winter was to be held at Aussie Angler at Briar Hill on Thursday, June 2. Unfortunately Covid struck again and we had to cancel. But these fly tying demonstrations will continue on the first Thursday of the month right through until September. As you are all aware, we are privileged to have some of the finest and most experienced fly tiers in the country in our Association, and I urge all of you with any interest to avail yourselves of this amazing resource.

Sunday Casting at the Red Tag casting pool commences on Sunday, June 5, at 10:00am. It repeats on the first Sunday in July, but in August the President's Casting Day is traditionally held on the Sunday after the Annual Dinner, which will make it Sunday August 21. All being well Ian Sambell, one of our highly qualified casting instructors, will be there on June 5 to help us with our technique, and there will be BBQ sausages for sustenance. This is an excellent opportunity for new members to mingle and throw a few loops in a very supportive environment. Older members with long memories will be reassured to know your President has a gate key with the blessing of Parks Victoria, and of course we are most grateful to Red Tag for permission to

use the pools for which they hold the head lease.

Gavin Hurley, who is well known to us all, will be our Guest Speaker in June. He is an excellent speaker and will no doubt regale us with stories of his recent trips to New Zealand and Christmas Island. I know many of us who have been locked up (or should that be 'down') are looking forward to travelling again, and I'm sure Gavin will whet your appetite. If there is time, I'm also interested to hear from Gavin a little about the small streams in West Gippsland. They get little coverage and yet are only a little over an hour from Melbourne. Maybe there is a good reason they are neglected ... or maybe not.

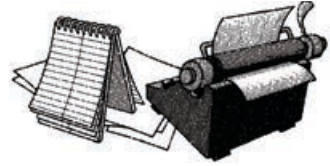
Looking further ahead, Peter Hayes has allocated Saturday February 4 to Saturday February 11 in 2023 for the VFFA week at Hayes on Brumby's in Tasmania, and your Council, in conjunction with our New Zealand member Rodger Muir, are putting the final touches on a proposed trip to Taupo in March next year. More details in future newsletters.

Coming back to the recent May meeting, there are a number of members who for various reasons weren't able to be there in person but would love to have been able to either zoom in remotely or have access to a You-tube video after the event. Your Council is actively looking at this idea with a view to perhaps purchasing the equipment and setting this up for all meetings. Feedback on this idea is earnestly sought and if anyone has special expertise in this area and could provide guidance, then I urge you to be in touch with me, preferably by mobile in the first instance.

Astute readers will note I have made no mention of the election ... perhaps the colouring of the Blue Bastard was an ominous sign from the fishing gods!



From the EDITOR'S DESK



"The most indispensable item in any fisherman's equipment is his hat. This ancient relic with its battered crown and well-frayed band, preserves not only the memory of every trout caught, but also the smell." (Corey Ford: *Tomorrow's the Day*)

"To fish fine and far off is the first and principal rule for trout angling." (Charles Cotton: *The Compleat Angler* – 1676)

"More big fish are caught within a range of 15 yards than outside it." (Dermot Wilson: *Fishing the Dry Fly*)

"Any meticulous attention to colour or detail in a fly pattern is wasted effort." (Vincent Marinaro: *In the Ring of the Rise*)

So you're heading off for a bit of troutting. What do you need to take? I guess the bare minimum would be a rod and line and some flies. In fact, I recall in my early days of fishing in Warrnambool in the 1970s we had a club member who was known for heading out with just those few items. A rod and reel, a fly tied on his leader, and three spare flies in a matchbox. He often called in on the lower Merri on his way home from work, had a few casts, then headed home.

At the other extreme we also enjoyed the company of the wonderful Artie Hogan. When Artie went fishing he took everything, probably including the kitchen sink. He even carted along some fly tying gear, just in case those picky Warrnambool trout were taking bugs he couldn't match from among the truckloads of flies he had in his numerous fly boxes. In which case he's sit on the bank and tie something up.

Artie was famous for his Green Matukas that supposedly matched some of the local baitfish. They were huge and tied on big hooks loaded with lead wire to make them sink quickly; the lower Merri being

quite deep. Locals using Artie's Matukas soon learned a vital casting adaptation – when you made your forward stroke and could hear his Matuka (known locally as sparrows) whistling through the air behind you then you ducked – or got scalped.

Philip Weigall got me thinking about what you need when you head off for some fishing. In a recent article in his *FlyStream* magazine he gave his list of items that shouldn't be left behind. Philip's list was perhaps more concerned with fishing trips of a few days rather than a short outing, and included floatant, desiccant powder, tippet material, leader material, net with lanyard, wading boots including spare laces, waders and socks, and lots of other fairly predictable and obvious items. Some of his not so obvious items included a cigarette lighter to singe his stick caddis patterns and remove leeches, a rain jacket, a buff, a beanie, sun gloves, insect repellent, head torch and a spare rod.

A fellow angler I got to know well when I moved back to Melbourne in >>>

the 1980s was Richard Goodall, VFFA treasurer for many years. When Richard went fishing he had a bag in the boot of his car containing a towel and a complete set of clothes. He had fallen in on one occasion and discovered that spending the rest of your day soaking wet was intensely unpleasant. So the spare clothes were always in the boot of his car.

I was pondering what I could add to Philip's list – items that I take that mightn't be on the list of 'obvious things'. An iPhone of course, but these days everyone has one of those. A spare reel with a different line, pills for treating cramp (I've been caught with cramp on a couple of occasions), snake bandages, a few bandaids, suntan cream of course, sun gloves (the backs of my hands have been burnt too often), a wading staff (essential for me these days in rocky freestone streams), forceps for easing flies out of the mouth of any trout I catch, and a pair of secateurs (for when the blackberries and other shrubbery along the river are pestiferous). And of course a small camera, an apple, fruit bars and a bottle of water.

As research I emptied the pockets of my vest and discovered some Snake River Mud (wow!), Mucilin, a compass, a stream thermometer, and a small hook sharpener. My polaroids are bifocal prescription glasses so I'm not one of the many who need to change glasses to change a fly.

A possibility I've often pondered but haven't ever followed through with was the idea of taking two rods. On rivers one rod could be set up for fishing a dry fly and the other for nymphing. So if I fished a section with the dry fly for a nil response, then I could easily fish the same section again with the nymph. On lakes the second rod could be loaded with a sinking line of some sort. As I said, I've thought about this but haven't yet tried

it, although I do recall reading an article some time ago by Adam Royter. He took two rods up the river on one occasion and discovered when he got home that one of them was still back there leaning against a tree. Many lists included toilet paper, which can have a number of uses. Among other things it's not bad for drying off and repairing drowned dry flies.

Ron Giles in a New Zealand magazine dated 2003 has a long list including indicator yarn, leader sinkant, his fishing licence (fairly important in New Zealand – I've been asked to show mine), a Swiss Army knife, tape measure, first aid kit and insect repellent.

Antony Boliiancu at the Goulburn Valley Fly Fishing Centre also produced his list some years ago. Antony included insect sample containers (that's getting serious), a small telescope, a torch, a whistle (perhaps for making contact with companions, though I think hand-held two-way radios might be more useful here), a nail knot tool and a fold up insect sampling net to check what's drifting in the bubble lines. Pre-rigged tippets appeared in his list and other lists. Fly line cleaner also appeared reasonably often.

In a recent issue of the UK *Fly Fishing & Fly Tying* magazine one of the writers listed tea making facilities and a biscuit or two. Which reminded me of a VFFA trip to Nokomai in New Zealand many years ago. I had the good fortune on some days to be partnered with Richard Garvey, who took along a small gas burner and tea-making essentials. I well remember a number of pleasant cuppas under trees along the Mataura. A very pleasant break from all those big browns we had been hauling in.

Finally – Chris Bassano's fishing vest. I have a Tasfish *Fishing News* article here where Chris describes what's in his vest

and how he organises it all. He obviously arranges his gear in his vest with a great deal of thought and planning. It's a lengthy article so I'll give just a few of Chris's inclusions that have not already been listed. Thus tippet rings, fish stomach pump, Tiemco Fly Kerchief, a Smith Creek Rig Keeper loaded with pre-tied leaders, a Smith Creek Rod Holder (Chris may take three rods with him when fishing in a competition), bungy cord and cable ties, and of all things – pain killer tablets.

Chris also mentioned that when he ties his dry flies he treats them with floatant (liquid silicone) as soon as he finishes them, then leaves them for a day or two before fishing with them. He also does

this with his CDC flies. The other obvious feature is that his fly boxes are incredibly neat and organised.

So there you go – what other people take with them when they head off to enjoy some fishing. It's a tease – take heaps (just in case) and you're loaded up and weighed down and your time out is wearing and hard work. But at the same time there's nothing worse than something you need urgently and it's home in the cupboard.

I'll leave you to make your own choices.

Best wishes, Lyndon



Peter Joseph – Our Speaker for July

Peter took up the study of medicine and fly fishing in 1963, and found 'lifelong pleasures' in both. While Adelaide may not have seemed a likely centre for trout, the Mt Lofty Ranges streams were very productive, and the Torrens River was only half an hour from home.

But that didn't prevent Peter looking for greener pastures. His first trip to Victoria and the Snowy Mountains was in January 1963, and he fished Tasmania in 1964 and New Zealand in 1968.

He formally joined the South Australian Fly Fishing Association (SAFFA) in 1964, having helped at the hatchery and with trout distribution during 1963.

His professional life in medicine involved working in a number of significant areas. Following two years working in hospitals and a year in rural practice he returned to the Royal Adelaide Hospital for four years of surgical training. His later years continued to be incredibly



Dr Peter Joseph

busy and fulfilling. He was involved in training medical students and young GPs, and was a member of innumerable committees and councils involved >>>

in health and medicine in South Australia. Such was his influence and contribution that he was honoured by the uncommon award of AMA Fellowship in 1989. He retired late last year.

But he didn't retire from fly fishing. He enjoyed annual trips to the Snowies and Monaro for the Freshwater Fisherman's Assembly and many trips to Tasmania. There were also annual trips to New Zealand, usually with friends, until these were interrupted by COVID.

At our July meeting he will tell us about some of his countless memories and friendships from fishing. He will talk briefly about SAFFA and how this very active Association has maintained a trout fishery against the odds in South

Australia. He will also give some insights into the changes he has seen in the New Zealand fishery over the past 30 years.

In his note describing his life and fishing he finishes with some very appropriate poetry:

"O what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive

the swift trout with feathered lure,
ourselves enmesh in bonds secure

The trammel of our sport's allure,

And so employing "Fur and Feather"
indulge ourselves in lifelong pleasure"



Vale Andy Zarro – 21/7/1950 – 29/4/2022

Angelo (Andy) Zarro had been a member of the VFFA for 15 years. He was a very skilled and competent angler, and had purchased a house in Khancoban so that he had access to the rivers of northern Victoria and southern NSW.

A close long-time friend of Andy's, Ian Laird, spoke at his funeral and provided the following note telling something Andy's life:

"Andy lived by good values. He was trustworthy, loyal, had a strong work ethic, and had a fun-loving sense of humour. He was strong and brave to the end.

Andy and I met in 1973. He was working for the Commonwealth Bank and was in the market for a new car. I was working for Ferntree Gully Nissan and I sold Andy a new Datsun 180B. He specifically wanted Gympie gold duco, brown upholstery, and a white vinyl roof.



We clicked personally and soon established a good rapport. Andy called in often, and decided to leave the bank and join the dealership selling cars. He became very successful.

We worked hard together and our friendship blossomed. We socialised together most Friday and Saturday nights. I lived in inner Melbourne and



Andy was a skilled fly fisher – this fish caught in a Southern NSW stream (photo from Dermot O'Brien's collection)

took Andy to a number of nightspots and parties, some of which remain quite memorable.

Obviously our lives would eventually go in different directions, but our friendship never did. Andy was a welcome guest at my parents' holiday house in Queenscliff where he became a favourite of my parents. Likewise, I enjoyed his hospitality at his next venture – a dairy farm in Simpson in the Western District of Victoria.

Andy applied himself successfully to the hard slog of dairy farming. He adjusted well to rural life and made many good friends. Notably he made the front page of the *Weekly Times*, photographed riding a bull. He also managed his getaway holiday to Europe during this time.

After 23 years of dairy farming he negotiated a deal to sell his farm, giving

him the opportunity to retire and enjoy this time. He purchased houses in Melbourne, and in Khancoban where he fulfilled his love of fishing and hunting. He was a very capable bushman.

When in Melbourne he began his career as a tournament poker player. Success led him to Crown Casino on a regular basis, then onwards and upwards to the World Championships in Las Vegas. He befriended many locals and gathered information on the 'Old Las Vegas'. He said many times, "If we had gone there in the 1970s we would never have left."

We continued to meet for lunches and dinners in Melbourne prior to Covid and remained close via phone calls, riding the bumps with his health issues. Andy was best man at my wedding in 1989 and he has remained a dear and valued friend."

>>>

Rod Barford also knew Andy well, and provides the following glimpse of Andy's fishing skills:

"I had known Andy for 45 years. We met when Kay and I were on our honeymoon in 1977. She had generously agreed to me bringing some fly gear along for the last night's stay near Thornton.

We had parked at Gilmore's Bridge and Kay was preparing dinner while I fished. As I approached the water I spied a bloke sporting a spin outfit in one hand and a fly rod in the other. I said to him, "Mate, if you ever want to progress with the fly rod, you'd better leave that spin rod at home." That sentence began a two hour tuition session.

At one point we could hear Kay calling: "Rod! Dinner in 5!" Then in what seemed ten minutes later she said: "I'm going to bed." When I looked at my watch, I was horrified to see 10 pm staring at me!

Andy and I fished together countless times after that. He and I often headed off to some distant location to hunt trout. We walked the 15 kilometres into Pretty Plain a number of times for a four or five day stay, fishing the upper Tooma River long before it became fashionable, as well as the upper Geehi and tributary creeks. We didn't ever see other anglers on any of those outings.

Sometimes we fished for the enormous browns that lurked in the Curdies River in the Victorian Western District, and even bigger ones swimming through the tussocks in a coastal paddock where Andy had some cows agisted, and these were really big trout!

It's quite startling to see 12 – 15 lb trout in water just deep enough for them to navigate, and even bigger ones in the river itself. The farmer and his wife would be out in their waders with pitchforks! Their freezer was full with enormous browns that I would suggest averaged 14 - 15lbs

I visited Andy at his home in Rowville the day before he went into hospital to begin chemotherapy treatment. He said he hoped to be back home in 2 - 3 days. I called him regularly and assured him that as soon as he felt up to it I would pick him up for a day on the Goulburn.

It didn't happen. His brother called me early Saturday with the news that Andy had gone. I will greatly miss my little mate and his wicked sense of humour, and especially the sight of his oversize straw hat winding its way through the bankside scrub on a Snowy Mountains stream."



ATF News – the Recent Trout Fest at Eildon

... from Terry George, ATF president

On May 14 the Trout Fest Celebration, organised by the Australian Trout Foundation, was held at Eildon Pondage. It proved a very popular and successful event, despite the weather. The cold temperatures and perpetual drizzle didn't help.

A large and enthusiastic team of volunteers gathered for the day. Shane Heuston and a colleague from the Yarra Valley Fly Fishing Club endured the conditions outdoors to demonstrate their fly casting skills, and Ben Scullin from VRFish provided lessons on lure casting. These events were popular, and our

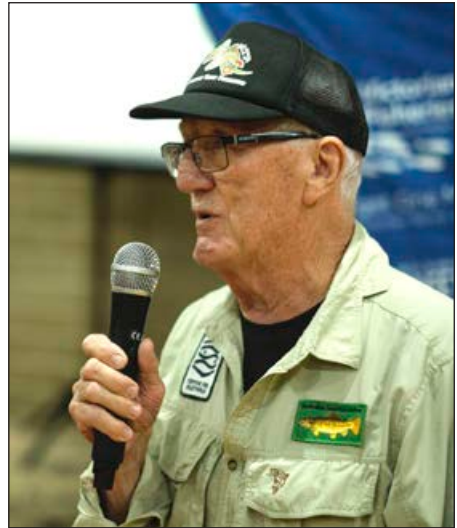
demonstrators were busy for much of the day.

Inside the community centre the traffic was also solid. Richard Kos (Kossie), a top fly tier from the VFFA, had many visitors and admirers of his fly tying skills, and Rick and Jo Dobson's coffees went cold continually because they were so busy demonstrating their responsible fishing accessories and providing explanations of 'responsible catch and release procedures'.

Another highlight in the community centre were the fly casting lessons given to the smaller kids by David Grisold and his able assistant Chris Gray. The expressions on the kids' faces were priceless.

Fishcare had 120 youngsters go through their introductory responsible fishing at the pondage, but unfortunately we didn't see many of these participants back at the community centre. We'll make sure that they start the day at the community centre at future Trout Fest events.

Tonnes of thanks to all of those mentioned above, along with our friends and supportive staff from VFA, including Taylor Hunt, Greg and the superb event organisers, Belinda Lorensini and Belinda Yim.



ATF President Terry George opening the 2022 Trout Fest



VFFA representatives – Richard Kos fly tying, with Simon Joel and Jenny and David Hooke in support



Richard Kos, one of our VFFA top fly tiers, demonstrating his skills



David Grisold spent his day teaching youngsters how to cast with a fly rod



Rick and Jo Dobson from Aussie Angler gave explanations on responsible catch and release procedures

The Donger: Close ... but, “weigh” off in a close finish

... from Mike Jarvis

After three years without a competition for the Dudley Lee Donger, thanks to cancellation due to torrential rain followed then by two years of COVID, the cracks of the VFFA and BFFC gathered to the fray once again on the banks of the mighty Mitta Mitta.

The conditions were perfect, the rivers in great condition and according to the reports, there were plenty of fish around. And all this was true until the rain began late on the Friday night.

But Saturday dawned clear and dry and the two teams spread out throughout the Mitta catchment in search of a potential winning fish. By dinner that evening Bairnsdale had the edge with a 1¾ lb trout, just 8 ounces ahead of the VFFA's early take.

By Sunday morning the Mitta was up by a couple of feet and looked more like the overflow from the Cadbury factory than a pristine mountain river. Undaunted, the teams went out again in search of clean water. And some found it.

With just a couple of hours to go before the weigh-in, ex-President Mike Jarvis struck it lucky in the lower Livingstone, taking several fish heavier than the previous day. Things were looking up. And then disaster struck when the scales he had been using refused to work. Just stopped. Right when he was trying to weigh a fine brown estimated at 2 lb or so.

Meanwhile, Bairnsdale ace Mick Rosenboom had netted and accurately weighed a two-pounder. He had the proof, and Bairnsdale retained the Donger.

It was close, but as they say, “no cigar”. Well done Mick, and well done Bairnsdale.

Despite the challenges of the weather it was a great weekend with old friends from the two clubs getting re-acquainted after a three-year break. As usual the hospitality of the BFFC was beyond bounds and the accommodation at the Mitta Lodge was first class.

Here's to next year!

Rod Barford's Latest Eucumbene Report

I returned from Eucumbene on Saturday after a fairly successful trip with some beautiful sunny days to start, but bone-chilling cold for the last couple. Even some snow!

Had some great sessions, the best being 13 from 2 hours fishing, with 11 the following evening. On both days four caught in the mornings and two in the afternoons. I averaged 8 fish per day overall.

The sizes? Nothing outstanding netted, although I lost one of about 5 lb just as I was beaching it. The fly simply fell out and away he swam. The most common size of fish caught was about 2 lb, with a few 3 pounders. Again they were mostly rainbows, and they pulled like freight trains. There were also lots of juvenile rainbows present, mostly about 10" in length.

Losing sizable fish at the net seems to have become my lot on Eucumbene these days. It keeps happening (I blame the barbless hooks). But tricking them into eating my fly is what I seek, and the fight is the cherry on top. So losing them in that way just saves me having to unhook them, and it saves them from more struggle.

My most frenetic session was when I caught six rainbows in a half-hour.

All were caught on a Craig's Night-time. During the daytime I fished the same mud-eye patterns I fished on my previous trip, with a few sessions using a Green Fuzzy or Gum Beetle. The strong north-westerly wind on those sunny days blew a lot of them onto the lake, and the fish were up and prowling.

We Start Them Young

... this note is from John Pilkington – a justifiably very proud grandparent.

Hi Lyndon,

I just had to send you this photo of my grandson Lenny Pilkington (aged 2 years 8 months) and his first fish - caught in the Big River the other day. It's a redfin but he hooked it and brought it in himself.

The Pilkington tradition continues ...

Cheers, John



Lenny Pilkington's very first fish

Brief Report on the North-East

... from Brian Eddy

It's getting quite late in the season – just a week or two left and then we need to leave the trout alone while they attend to their spawning interests. Brian, who lives at Harrietville on the Ovens River, has managed just a few final casts.

It was an Historical Society excursion, but I slipped away for a few minutes before the speeches, and although conditions weren't bad (clear water, calm, overcast, very "dunny day" but no duns!), I didn't disturb or see any signs of a fish. Such a short sample (in time and amount of water covered) means little of course.

I've attached a couple of photos just to show what the river is like up here - about 12 kilometres above Buckland Junction on the East Branch of the Buckland.

The following day I fished the Ovens at the back of our home. I didn't cover any more water than I had at the Buckland, but had three takes, landing one. It's just that they were "up and about" at that

time. The fly was a wet Red Tag, one I've used for many years. I'll write it up sometime if you want.

Cheers, Brian



Perhaps Brian's last rainbow for the year



The upper Rubicon is a very attractive and productive fishery

Old Flies – The Alaska Mary Ann

... from Alan Pilkington

In the 1990s and early 2000s I often fished in Alaska. I had dreamed of doing so since a youngster, but never had the time and the wherewithal aligned until, one day, I was invited to join a group of fly fishing anglers by a client who had recently bought a large Alaskan commercial fishing enterprise. The trip was to reward some of those who had helped put the deal together.



Emblem of the Alaska Fly Fishers Club

I did not qualify on the latter score, but as I was a fringe member of the group and a known fly fishing addict, I was invited nevertheless, and we had a magical week in the Wood River/Tikchik area, east of Bristol Bay. We took, on the fly, king (chinook), red (sockeye) and silver (coho) salmon, rainbow trout, arctic char



Here are a couple of fresh Alaskan Coho (silver) salmon that fell to Alan's Alaska Mary Ann fly in the mid 1990s.



Alan's version of the fly tied with a bucktail wing.

and grayling, on rods ranging from five to ten weight. We had an adventurous time, flying out each day to new water in De Havilland Beavers. On one scary and memorable return trip to the lodge the pilot borrowed my Leatherman multitool to unscrew the starboard cowling to inspect the engine which had suddenly lost pressure during takeoff. We had bounced back down to the river, taxied unevenly to shore in a strong and uncooperative current, but then the pilot couldn't find the right sized screwdriver! My vintage Leatherman saved the day!

I had tied most of my flies for the trip using Anthony Route's book, *Flies for Alaska*, and they included the (then) standards like the Purple Egg Sucking Leech, the Flash Fly, the Flesh Fly and the Battle Creek Special. I had also tied a streamer I liked the look of, the Alaska Mary Ann, and I caught many of my fish on it during trips when small bait fish were evident. It was a simple smolt streamer and just looked fishy - a white bucktail wing over a silver ribbed white body with a red tag and jungle cock eyes. Tied sparse, it moved through the water like every minnow or whitebait or smolt you've ever seen, and in different sizes all the Alaskan fish, except for the grayling, found it irresistible. I am sure >>>

smolt feeding fish in New Zealand and Australia would find it equally attractive, if they haven't already.

For the next ten years or so I visited Alaska every year at least once, usually for a week, sometimes two. I was taken not only by its fishing but by its wildness and natural beauty, and the wildlife: the bears, bald eagles, sea otters, wild sheep, mountain goats and caribou, and the countless runs of spawning salmon and the big, wild rainbow trout and char that followed in their wake, gorging on salmon eggs or alevin or smolt. I spent time in the wilderness researching my novel, *American Serengeti*, and always had a fly rod with me, along with my rifle and camera. I joined the Alaska Fly Fishers (I'm now a long-ago lapsed member) and learned that the smolt fly that had become my favorite, the Alaska Mary Ann, was the club's emblem. I decided to learn more about it.

Like many famous flies, the Alaska Mary Ann has many origin stories, but the man generally credited with first tying it is Frank Dufrense, who is said to have tied it in the 1940s. He had arrived in Alaska as a young man, it is said, to recover from the spiritual fatigue of WW1. He was captivated by it and stayed for much of his life, becoming a popular outdoor writer (I used to read some of his stories in *Field and Stream*, as a boy) while working as a guide, a hunter and a fisherman. His books, *My Way Was North*, and *No Room for Bears*, tell fascinating stories of his life in the Alaskan wilderness during the first half of the 20th century. He became an advocate for the wilderness and for wildlife conservation, and eventually became Director of Alaska's Game Commission.

The story has it that he tied the fly after losing his last Inuit lure, the *Kobuk Hook*. The Inuit are indigenous people who



Autobiography of Frank Dufrense

inhabit the arctic and sub-arctic region, and they made this lure using a sliver of walrus ivory shaped like a minnow with a bent copper nail through it as a hook, some polar bear hair tied on top, pieces of whale bone added for eyes, and a piece of red material from inside a guillemot's beak (or from its feet) as a tail.

Frank's tie used polar bear hair for the wing, a white wool body ribbed with silver tinsel, red feathers or wool for the tail (or tag), and jungle cock feathers for eyes. The tie I originally used was the same except that I substituted white bucktail for polar bear hair. Bucktail does not have the lustre and iridescence of polar bear hair, but at least it is legal in the U.S., and it is white and moves with life in the water. Subsequently I was fortunate to find some polar bear hair in Canada, where



The box of ten vintage Alaska Mary Ann flies Alan chanced across at his Seattle fly fishing club.

it was legal to buy and sell. A common variant is to simply use a silver body with mylar or other silver ribbing material, and not the white wool, as in the body of a Mickey Finn streamer. This simple, almost generic bait fish fly became popular and has many variations, being tied no doubt with whatever similar materials were available to anglers away from fly shops on remote Alaskan rivers, lakes, and coastlines. With modern tying materials and substitutes (like bucktail) for the original natural material, its form, but not its substance, has endless versions.

You can imagine my surprise at a recent meeting of my local Seattle fly fishing

club, Northwest Fly Anglers, when I came across an old plastic box of ten size #8 Alaska Mary Ann flies, tied the original way, with polar bear hair wings and jungle cock eyes, tied on old Mustad Limerick streamer hooks as called for in the early pattern books.

The flies were unused, the box perhaps unopened, and the polar bear hair had yellowed a little with age. They were made in Portland, Oregon, by The Oregon Waters Fly Company, I expect no later than the early 1970s when the trade in polar bear parts and their use became restricted in the United States. But the box and the labeling and its printing seem older than that, reminding me more of the 1950s or early 1960s. They were part of a large trove of old flies and fly tying material, vintage rods and reels an older club member was selling as he prepared to move to smaller digs. I snapped them up for \$5. What a find! Ten beautifully and authentically tied iconic Pacific Northwest flies – The Alaska Mary Ann. It will be tempting not to try one when next I'm in Alaska, and dream I am Frank Dufrense casting one of the sixty-year-old flies on a wild river for the first time.



Our Ukulele Troubadour

Many of our members will recall having been entertained at VFFA trips and functions by our very own musical fly fisher – Professor Kevin Hindle.

The Professor tells us that after 40 years, “Our friend Kevin Hindle has just returned to performing music professionally under his Alter Ego, Professor Brighton Beeche: singing and playing the ukulele and cigar box guitar.”

To support this project he has started a YouTube channel called ‘Ukulele Troubadour’. But to secure this name

he needs to have a hundred channel subscribers ASAP. He is asking his many VFFA friends to help him get there.

It's easy: Just click the link below and then press SUBSCRIBE.

As Kevin says, you're bound to like his music. And he will be very grateful for your help.

The link:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSfrd_74Lm2ZpgStWiwKTg

Nick Taransky Reporting on New Zealand

The season has just ended here, marking one year since we first touched down in New Zealand. It's been a strange stop-start time, with lockdowns and other restrictions, and more time settling in than going fishing. I did squeeze in some late season fishing however...

Brook Trout Quest

My local friend Angus had told me about a nearby stream containing brook trout, so I have been itching to get there ever since. Even though the promised fish were "wee little things", I was as excited about them as Kiwi brown and rainbow thumpers. The drive on the bitumen was relatively short, but once we hit the farm property I was on gate duty and each of the dozen gates seemed to have at least two closing mechanisms, including a variety of different styles. If it was an intelligence test I was pushed to the limit, but eventually we arrived at the banks of a gorgeous rocky stream. The flow looked perfect, but we had experienced a very hot and dry summer, so recent rains had probably "pepped up" the river to some degree. My anticipation for eager, plentiful, colourful little brookies had me lining up my rod with fumbling fingers.

We took turns fishing bubble lines, undercuts and pocket water. No fish came to the fly, but it was early in the day and the weather and action would surely soon warm up. Well, after two more hours, and no sign of a fish either moved or sighted, our bravado and confidence started to shake and wane a little. The signs of copious amounts of cormorant poo on the rocks was disturbing me a little.

Morning became afternoon, with no change to our fortunes. Then, at a perfect pool Angus called out: "I see a fish". Relief! It was a fish. But unfortunately it was lying upside down on the bottom, dead. We fished it out for a closer look, and indeed, it was my first New Zealand brook trout. I couldn't help but pass

comment to Angus that New Zealand brook trout seemed a little different to Australian brook trout. The Aussie ones were more "wiggly and colourful", while the Kiwi ones, in my experience, were more "stiff and dead".

After my perceptive observation we soldiered on, and not long after Angus spotted a fishy-looking shape in a gravelly slot. Numerous casts wouldn't budge it. A closer look revealed that though 'fishing-looking', the shape was actually a stick. Just as I was about to compare Australian brook trout to New Zealand sticks, a small ACTUAL FISH bolted past us. Things were looking up. Except they weren't. That proved to be our last "action" for the day. We soldiered on for a couple more hours before agreeing that the heat, the low water, and the feathered "black plague" had



This lovely run had zero fish in it



Angus carefully presents his fly to a pool devoid of any fish

made, at the very least, a “dent” in the brookie population (the sort of dent that a sledghammer makes).

As sobering as the experience was, it was a valuable lesson in placing too much faith in expectation, rather than taking each day as it comes. In truth, it was still an enjoyable day in good company. I’m confident that there are some brookies tucked away in the headwaters and overgrown sub-tributaries of the stream to reboot the population. So I will go back, but with realistic expectations. If nothing else, I might be able to catch a stick.

And a couple of days after the ill-fated brookie quest, I had a short session in the Moawhango River to finish my season. After a few browns eluded my flies, a nice rainbow took pity on me and gave me a good tussle to finish my last cast of the season on a proper New Zealand fish

...

Winter Fishing Awaits?

Of course the end of April is only the end of the fishing for us upstream dry fly Week Jacket brigade. For many, the lure of the Tongariro and other similar waters are the highlight of their season. My shocking secret is that despite regular visits to New Zealand, and now living here, I’ve never fished the Tongariro or any of the other winter fisheries. Time will tell if that changes, but the thought of my two-handed bamboo rod bent up on a hot running rainbow has me reconsidering my absence from the icy water...

Best Regards

Nick Taransky



A “typical” New Zealand brook trout



A Kiwi rainbow saves the day on the last cast of the “season”

Five Tips for Targeting Spooky, Educated or Highly Pressured Fish

This is the text from a YouTube presentation found on April Vokey's website. The original presentation can be found at: <https://anchoredoutdoors.com/5-tips-for-targeting-spooky-educated-or-highly-pressured-fish/>. Jackie Holbrook works with April and has very kindly provided the text of her talk for this issue of *Fly Lines*. The website given above is well worth checking. We are very grateful to both April and Jackie for permission to use this material. April's website at <https://www.aprilvokey.com> is also well worth a look.

By Jackie Holbrook

It doesn't matter what species of fish you're targeting, landing a monster is an accomplishment. That's because big fish grow big for a reason. They're smart and spooky, which makes them hard to catch. To improve your odds of hooking and landing one of these highly-educated fish, you need to understand how they act, where to find them and how to avoid messing it up.

Look Before You Fish

Josh Nugent is the owner/guide at Out Fly Fishing in Calgary, Alberta. He says too many anglers throw their line in the water without even looking. Experience has taught him to slow down and look at the water before fishing.

"Just keep observing and you'll notice, holy smokes, there's half a dozen fish in the run that at first glance had nothing in it," Nugent said in the Anchored Outdoors' Masterclass Targeting Spooking, Educated or Highly Pressured Fish. "If you waded straight into the water, you'd spook all those fish."

Nugent likes to find a high vantage point, like a bridge. He spends a few minutes analysing the water and looking for fish. Look long enough and you should be able to pick up the movement of a fish or find their outline in the water.

"We want to target the fish before they know that we're there," Nugent said. "A

fish that knows you're there will be much spookier and harder to catch."

Stay Hidden

Many big game hunters won't go hunting without wearing head-to-toe camouflage, and that's because they know their best shot at filling their bag is to remain undetected. Nugent says anglers could learn a little something about staying concealed.

"Clothing matters. Brand names don't, but colours do," Nugent said. "You don't have to wear a gilly suit... but wear something that has earth tones and matches the colours that you're around."

If the fish can't see you coming, they won't have a reason to be spooked. Nugent says you don't have to go full camo but anglers should wear colours that blend into their surroundings. He believes earth tones work the best. So while you might think that your favourite fishing hat brings you luck, it might actually bring you down.

"It's amazing how often anglers will wear earth tones but then they're wearing a bright red hat that you can see coming down the river," Nugent said. "Bright clothing may look great in photos, but you'll spook more fish. If you want to catch more fish wear drab colours or colours that blend."

Regardless of what you're wearing, try to stay out of their sight and stay away

from the bank whenever possible. Always try to approach the fish from behind the tail and avoid entering into their line of vision.

Know Where They Live

If you're not fishing where the fish are you're wasting your time. Nugent says anglers need to understand where fish hang out—and why. Find the food, and you'll likely find the fish. Look for eddies, seams and foam that can sweep up insects and various terrestrials. Nugent also says spooky fish will always want an escape route.

"Fast water and deep water are both safe, so if they get spooked from feeding, they are going to want to retreat quickly to faster or deeper water, or both," Nugent said.

Pressured trout will often feed in skinny, shallow water. That's because they can easily see predators coming. Ospreys and eagles can't safely dive in and catch trout in 6-inches of water.

"If fish are feeding at the surface in deeper water their silhouette will stand out for birds and anglers to see," Nugent said. "Fish know this, and that's why

they slide into shallow skinny water where their camo blends in."

Fish the Tough Spots

When a fish feels pressured, it moves into a low-pressure area. For anglers that means finding and effectively fishing water that most anglers can't reach. Nugent says to look for places where most anglers walk by, or stretches of water that require a technical or tricky cast and drift.

"If 95 out of 100 anglers can't get a drag-free drift, I guarantee there will be a big fish," Nugent said.

Be Patient

Nugent says if there's one skill that anglers need to have to target spooky fish it's patience.

"Some of the best anglers that I know are the most patient anglers that I've ever met, they take their time, they don't rush in and they watch first," Nugent said. "If you want to catch the fish that others have spooked and weren't able to fool, you are just going to have to be more patient than they were."

For more tips check out the Anchored Outdoors Masterclass "Targeting Spooky, Educated or Highly Pressured Fish."

Peter Hayes on Casting

Here is another article on casting from Peter Hayes. Again we thank Peter for allowing us to publish his material.

Lessons from two weeks of Sydney casting schools

Let me share with you what I've learned in these past weeks working every day with fly fishers just like you.

1. When practicing your casting you simply **MUST WATCH AND STUDY** every single back cast.

2. Casting on the correct trajectory or alignment is gold. This means that any back cast **MUST BE ALIGNED WITH THE FORWARD CAST**. The angle or trajectory of the cast should suit the distance you are casting. So a close target demands a high back cast and lower forward cast. A longer target requires a slightly lower back cast and higher forward >>>

cast. Never should the back cast be anywhere near the ground!

3. Maintaining line tension is as important as the previous two points - perhaps even more important! NEVER LET THE LINE FULLY UNROLL IN ANY DIRECTION or it will kick, lose energy, drop due to gravity and be easily moved out of alignment by the wind.

If the line straightens then you are too late with the timing. You have lost tension.

Make sure you ease into the opposite stroke while the line still has a foot or two left to unroll. Learn to 'catch' the corner. Don't let your fly line head butt the wall then have to turn around and move off in the opposite direction from a standing, static, start.

Lessons from Lefty Kreh and invisible fly lines

You may remember in a recent BLOG post I talked about the three biggest issues holding most people back from becoming a better caster. The following may help you better understand the first point - learning to watch your loops.

Nine times out of ten people don't watch their back cast. Yet the back cast is often the biggest problem. Get it right and the forward cast becomes a no brainer.

THE GREATEST BARRIER TO YOUR IMPROVEMENT WILL BE YOUR INABILITY TO STUDY YOUR BACKCAST LOOP.

Don't just watch your back casts - study your loops. You need to study both the back and forward casts for loop shape and form if you wish to become a better fly caster.

1. Loop Shape - fat, parallel or tailing?

Fat - has the loop got a convex or domed top leg and a concave or sagging bottom leg?

Parallel - are the top and bottom legs parallel?

Tailing - is the top leg dipping down toward the bottom leg, crossing over then rising up again?

2. Width - is it 2 feet wide or 8 feet wide?
3. Trajectory - up at 45 degrees or horizontal or 30 degrees down? The back cast and forward cast should be absolutely opposite each other.
4. Tracking - did you aim the back cast opposite the target line in the bird's eye view? Pick front and back targets that are opposite each other and aim your loops at these.
5. Unroll condition - was it half unrolled when you moved into the forward cast and you heard a crack? Was it fully straight when you commenced the forward cast? This is wrong too. Was it fully unrolled and dropping due to gravity as well as being blown out of tracking alignment by the wind?

The Olympic swimmer

I think the timing is right if you ease into the forward cast while the fly line has a foot or two of unroll left in it. This is how you maintain, conserve and then redirect energy. It is a cunning trick to learn. Think of your fly line turning the corner just like an Olympic swimmer doing a tumble turn. Like a fly line, a swimmer needs to change the direction of his or her momentum 180 degrees as smoothly as possible.

6. Line speed - was the loop traveling at 10 km/h or 50 km/h or 100 km/h? We need to change speed or tempo when it gets windy or when a fish is swimming away from us or when we want to cast longer or heavier flies.

Make sure you take note of every one of these attributes. Learn to change all of these loop attributes at will.

If you want to improve your casting you should be mostly trying to make consistent, smooth, tight loops of constant tension as aligned to the target as possible, with at least effort as possible.

How to practice

Cast single-handed with your line hand in your pocket. Use a soft/light grip on the rod. Stand sideways to the direction that you are casting in and cast with a slightly tilted out casting plane. This will make it easier to see your back cast. Try to see it more as a left and right cast rather than a forward and back cast.

Transfer weight a little – be light on your feet. Elbow bent and in close to your body.

The Cement Man

It is really important to transfer weight a little as you move between back and forward casts. You must have one foot or the other in front.

For a right-handed caster if you place your right foot in front of your left this is called a 'closed stance'. I like this for many situations but 'it depends' on many things.

If your left foot is leading this is an 'open stance'. Again, 'it depends', but as a general rule a closed stance is better for short accurate casts and an open stance is more suitable for longer distance casting.

However when you are practicing your casting in the park definitely use a wide open, side on, stance. This makes it easier to see and study your back cast loop shape.

Heel and toe

Choose a stance that you feel comfortable with. When you make a back cast, you should rock your body back until your front foot heel is on the ground. Your back foot should be flat on the ground.

On the forward cast you should rock your body forward until the back foot toe is on the ground and all of your front foot is on the ground.

Compact - better control and less effort

Of course 'it depends' but as a generalisation for accurate casting to 50 feet the following applies to most casters:

You should generally cast with a lower rod hand, a more bent and relaxed elbow, and a lighter, softer, hand grip - loosen those bottom three fingers. Use a close to vertical casting plane.

Transfer weight just a little and remember to smile. All of this will give better rod tip control and a smoother more fluent and effortless rod loading move.

Try to make yourself small and skinny. Imagine standing and casting within a fairly tight fitting cylinder. The cylinder rocks a little front to back. Result: better loops, less effort, more control.

Getting better at getting better

When you practice be sure to always study every back cast loop for all the attributes we have just discussed. But note: very rarely should you watch a back cast when you are actually fishing.

Do yourself a favour - spend a little time in the park with a bright orange 'Dogs Balls' practice line (email me for one if you don't have one). Practice a little, perhaps as short as 15 minutes at a time, but as often as possible. Try to practice a couple of times a week.

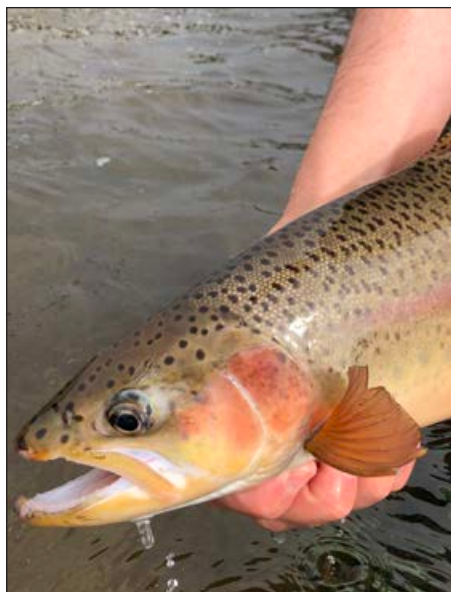
To start with just learn to watch/ study your loop shapes with a view to understanding them better. Play with your rod and line like you would a small child and watch the result. Mess with it and have fun :)



Wild rainbow trout management in yingina / Great Lake

... from Chris Wisniewski, Tasmania Inland Fisheries Service

For a number of years, the Inland Fisheries Service (IFS) trialed the stocking of yingina / Great Lake with rainbow trout that were hatched and reared at the IFS New Norfolk hatchery. The ova originated from wild adult rainbow trout caught in the Liawenee Canal spawning run. The results of these stockings however were inconclusive, but it appeared the young fingerlings were vulnerable to predation by the wild brown trout in the lake. There did not appear to be any significant increase in the catch rates of anglers from these stockings.



A rainbow trout in the Liawenee fish trap

In recent years the IFS has returned to moving the wild adult rainbows, caught in the Liawenee spawning trap, into designated spawning channels. Work has been undertaken to revitalise the channels with fresh gravel and extend

the area available for spawning. This is supported by the bag and size limits that were recommended in the Great Lake Management Plan of 2004.

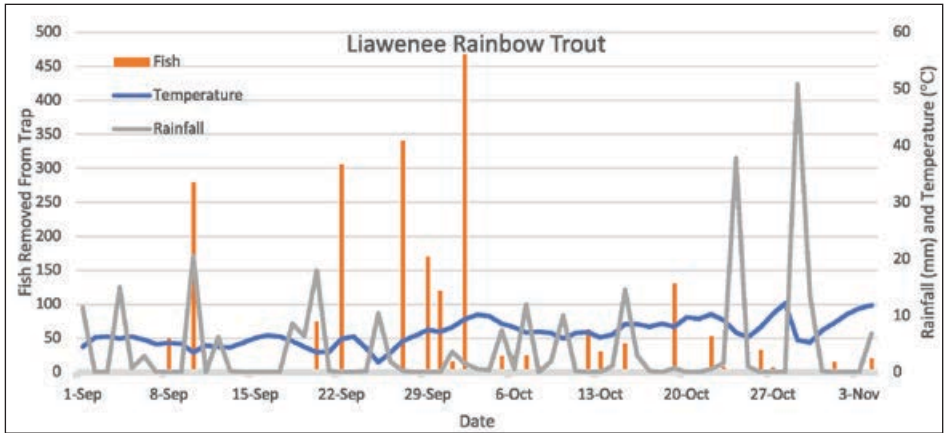
Recently there has been a general increase in the number of wild adult rainbows caught in the spawning fish trap, and there is anecdotal evidence of an increase in the number of rainbow trout being caught by anglers as reported during creel checks in 2021-2022 and positive feedback. In 2021 there was a big increase in the number of fish caught in the spawning trap and it will be interesting to see if this trend continues.

Trap	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Liawenee Canal – yingina / Great Lake	2,310	923	988	1,093	349	587	540

Table 1. Total number of adult rainbow trout captured in the Liawenee Canal spawning fish trap since 2015

Yingina/ Great Lake – Liawenee Canal

The Liawenee trap was opened on August 30, 2021. Due to wet conditions and high flows the trap was left running for longer than usual and closed on November 4. Liawenee received 102.8 mm of rain for September (see Graph 1). This is on par with the long-term average of 107.7 mm. A total of 163.8 mm of rain was received in October which is more than double the long-term average. The Liawenee Canal had high flows for the entirety of the run. An extended period of consistent flow prolonged the rainbow trout spawning run. A total of 2,310 rainbow trout were captured over the run, these being 932 males and 1,378 females.



Graph 1. The number of rainbow trout captured in the trap (counted when they are removed from the trap), the daily rainfall totals measured at the Liawenee weather station and temperature measured from within the trap.

Liawenee Spawning Channels

A total of 2,260 wild rainbow trout were moved from the Liawenee trap and placed into our purpose-built spawning channels at Liawenee. The dedicated channels enhance spawning success and protect recruitment for the yingina / Great Lake fishery. Stocking densities can be seen in table 2.

Destination	Total Number	Number of Males	Number of Females
Bottom long Channel	1,250	442	808
Bottom Zigzag	260	120	140
Middle Zigzag	260	120	140
Stripping Display	30	15	15
Top long Channel	320	145	175
Top Zigzag	140	65	75

Table 2. Summary of Liawenee Canal spawning channel stocking densities.



Wild adult rainbow trout released into Liawenee spawning channels

FLY OF THE MONTH

Polish Pheasant Tail Nymph



This fly was suggested to us by Richard Kos who has used it very successfully. For those who would like to see it tied, check on https://youtu.be/wA6_S8EJl-4 It's yet another nymph, but one that has proven to be very effective. From Davie McPhail's YouTube the materials and tying are as follows:

Materials:

Hook: Barbless – sizes 12, 14 or 16.

Bead: Tungsten gold bead – size appropriate for the hook size

Thread: 8/0 Uni-thread, colour - Fire Orange

Tail: Light-coloured ginger fibres from a cheap Chinese cock hackle

Rib: Fine copper wire

Tag: Fire Orange tying thread

Body: Natural pheasant tail fibres

Thorax: Natural hare fur

Tying Procedure:

1. Add the bead to the hook, then put the hook in the vise and run turns of thread from just behind the eye down to the bend then back to just behind the eye, then back to just before the bend again.
2. Select 5 or 6 light ginger cock fibres for the tail and lay them along the top of the hook shank so that a tail about the same length as the hook shank will be created.
3. Tie these fibres in firmly by taking turns of thread from just before the bend along the shank for 2 – 3 millimetres. Then take more turns back to the bend, then back to the 2 – 3 mm point again. In this process you are creating the bright orange tag at the tail end of the nymph.
4. Trim away the waste ends of the cock fibres used for the tail.
5. Now take a short length of the copper wire for the rib and tie it in with turns of thread just in front of the tag. Wrap turns of thread along the shank towards the eye, then back again to where the rib was tied in, thus building up the thickness of the body.
6. Select five or six fibres from a natural pheasant tail feather. Tie these in on top of the shank with one turn of thread immediately in front of the tag. Carefully pull the fibres back through this single turn of thread so that the fibres remaining between the tag and the bead are about one and a half times the length of the distance from the tag to the bead. (The YouTube video is very helpful in showing this step.)
7. Now tie these fibres in by making turns of thread along the shank to about 1 mm short of the back of the gold bead. (At this point the ends of the pheasant tail fibres will stick up in the air immediately behind the bead.)
8. Now create the body of the fly by taking the remaining ends of the pheasant tail fibres on the other side of the knot and tag, and wind these along the shank to form the body. These fibres should be wound to form the body in the opposite direct to the direction the thread was wound.
9. The thread is still hanging behind the eye, so it can now be used to tie in these pheasant tail fibres forming the body. Make four or five strong turns to tie them in firmly. Cut away the waste.
10. Now take the copper wire still hanging free and wind it in evenly spaced turns over the pheasant tail fibres to create the rib. Three to five turns (depending on hook size) tied in the opposite direction to the direction the pheasant tail fibres were tied in will create the rib.
11. Make a few strong turns of thread over the copper wire to tie the rib in, then trim away the waste wire.
12. Now take a small amount of hare body fur and wrap it around the thread. Make two or three turns of this hare fur dubbing behind the bead to create a thorax. Then push the pointy ends of the pheasant tail fibres sticking up behind the bead (from step 7 above) and make a few more turns of the hare's fur dubbing immediately behind the bead. This will cause these pheasant tail feather ends to be pushed back and around the hook like legs.
13. To finish the fly use a whip finish to tie the thread off immediately behind the bead.

VFFA 2022 meetings & other activities

(... all events subject to Covid restrictions)

June

- 1 Wednesday VFFA members visit Millbrook Lakes for a Winter visit, 10:00 am till dark.
2 Thursday Fly Tying at Aussie Angler Store, 30 Sherbourne Road, Briar Hill, commencing at 7:00 pm.
5 Sunday Casting at the Red Tag casting pool at 10:00 am
Casting instructor – Ian Sambell
15 Tuesday Trout season closes in Victorian rivers.
16 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 pm at the Kelvin Club.
Speaker – Gavin Hurley, from Hurley’s Fly Fishing, who will tell us about new fly fishing gear now available, the fishing in West Gippsland streams, and the Christmas Island and New Zealand trips that he organises.
29 Wednesday Council Meeting – 6:00 pm at the Kelvin Club.

July

- 3 Sunday Casting at the Red Tag casting pool at 10:00 am
Casting instructor – Jo Dobson
7 Thursday Fly Tying at Aussie Angler Store, 30 Sherbourne Road, Briar Hill, commencing at 7:00 pm.
21 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 pm at the Kelvin Club.
Speaker – Dr Peter Joseph AM, VFFA member and Patron of the South Australian Fly Fishers’ Association.
27 Wednesday Council Meeting – 7:00 pm Zoom meeting.

August

- 4 Thursday Fly Tying at Aussie Angler Store, 30 Sherbourne Road, Briar Hill, commencing at 7:00 pm.
18 Thursday Annual Dinner – 6:30 for 7:00 pm at the Kelvin Club:
Guest Speakers – Peter Broomhall and Joshua Hutchins
21 Sunday President’s Casting Day at the Red Tag Casting Pool, commencing at 10:00 am
31 Wednesday Council Meeting – 6:00 pm at the Kelvin Club.

September

- 1 Thursday Last Fly Tying session at Aussie Angler Store, 30 Sherbourne Road, Briar Hill, at 7:00 pm.
3 Saturday Trout season opens again for Victorian rivers
15 Thursday 2022 Annual General Meeting – 8:00 pm, and again a Zoom meeting.
28 Wednesday VFFA members visit Millbrook Lakes for some early Spring fishing, 10:00 am till dark.
28 Wednesday Council Meeting – 7:00 pm Zoom meeting.

October

- 9 Sunday Annual trip to Thorpdale to fish the Latrobe Valley club’s stocked dams as guests of the Latrobe Valley Fly Fishers
20 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 pm at the Kelvin Club:
Our Annual Auction
26 Wednesday Council Meeting – 6:00 pm at the Kelvin Club