FLY LINES

JULY 2018

The July Meeting with ATF President Terry George

Most members will have heard of the Australian Trout Foundation but many will possibly not be aware of just how much the Foundation has done in recent years to promote and improve our Victorian trout fishery. Terry George, a VFFA member, has been president of the ATF for some years and has been pivotal in much of this recent work. At our July meeting he will be telling us something about the current work and projects of the Foundation. His presentation has the intriguing title: "Alleviating the Current Threats to our Victorian Trout Fishery."

Terry has worked as a part-time fishing guide for some years in the state's north-east, and while he knows the trout fishing in this part of our state well he is committed to seeing the trout fishing in all parts of Victoria improve and flourish. He has given countless hours of his personal time and driven huge numbers of kilometres attending meetings and organising projects in all parts of the state (with habitat improvement, stocking policy, and the use of Scotty Jordan Incubators in rivers just a few of these activities).

Thursday, July 19,
8:00 pm,
at the Kelvin Club

So come along on July 19 and support one of our own members who is putting a lot of time and effort into improving our trout fishing.

All members are welcome to join us at 6:15 pm for dinner in the Kelvin Club prior to the meeting, but PLEASE make a booking by 5:00 pm on Wednesday, July 18, by phoning 0498 254 497 and leaving a message.

THE VICTORIAN FLY FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.
VOL. 66 NO.9 - July 2018
Organisation No. A0024750J
P.O. Box 18423 Melbourne Bourke Street, Melbourne 3001
info@vffa.org.au www.vffa.org.au

Index

The July Meeting with ATF President Terry George 1

VFFA Office Holders 2

President's Message 4

The August Annual Dinner with Peter Morse 5

The June Meeting Presentation by John Douglas 6

From the Editor's Desk 10

Some Current Notices 11

Web Fish 12

2018 Warrnambool Fly Fishers Annual Dinner 12

Wild Trout 2018 13

Useful Websites 14

This Year's Bruce Whitehead Western Lakes Challenge 14

Those Scotty Jordan Incubators 17

This Month's Yarn 19

Fly Tying 2018 20

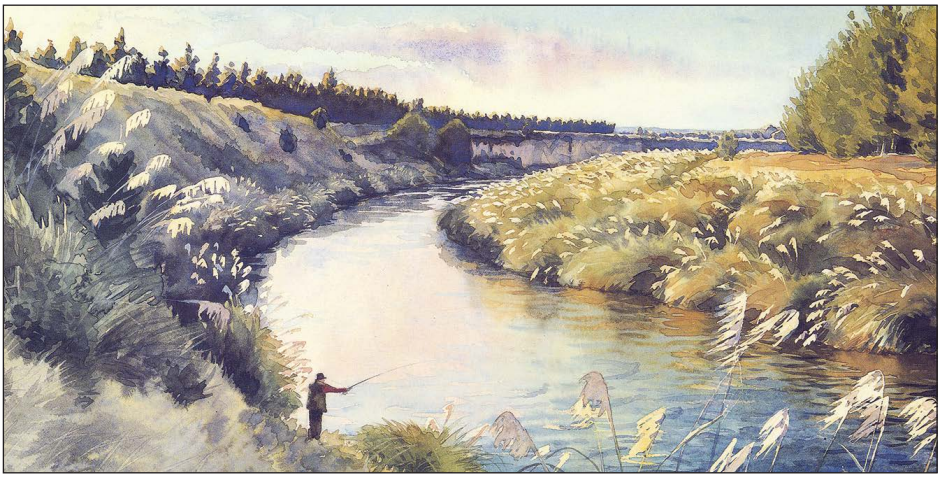
Fly Fishing in Japan 21

Trout Positive 26

To Stock or Not to Stock 27

Fly of the Month 33

VFFA Meetings & Activities 36



Rangitaiki River - a Nancy Tichborne watercolour

President's Message

(President Mike Jarvis is currently enjoying a few weeks travelling in Europe, so Council member Dermot O'Brien has agreed to write this month's message.)

President Mike Jarvis is overseas so I am pinch-hitting with the President's Message for July *Fly Lines*.

There has been a fantastic amount of recent activity involving VFFA members and just as much is coming up.

Thanks to Richard "Kossy" Kos and John Pilkington two super days of fly tying have taken place with good turnouts. There is a full report in this issue.

And about ten VFFA members braved bitterly cold weather at Snobs Creek on June 16 to load 60,000 brown trout eyed ova into Scotty Jordan Incubators for placement in Victorian streams. This was an Australian Trout Foundation initiative. It was a wonderful opportunity for the VFFA to get involved at ground level. It was a terrific day with trout fishers coming from all over Victoria to lend a hand. A full report is also in this *Fly Lines*.

The Bruce Whitehead Western Lakes Trophy tussle between teams from the VFFA and Bairnsdale Fly Fishers has just taken place in very cold weather at the two crater lakes, Purrumbete and Bullen Merri, near Camperdown. Unfortunately, few trout were caught. A brief report has been provided by Bruce Houghton and is also included in this issue. Bairnsdale retained the trophy with the best trout, a brown of 2.2 kg (5 lb) taken by Bairnsdale President Trevor Stow. VFFA member Peter Clayton acquitted himself well with two (sadly smaller) trout.

Trevor Hawkins and Jim Blakeslee both represented the VFFA, bringing much local knowledge to the event. Despite the lack of trout it was a great social get together. Congratulations to all.

Victorian Fisheries expert John Douglas was our guest speaker in June, and he brought a wonderful insight into the research being undertaken into trout in Victoria. Attendance was a little light on and I am putting that down to bitter weather.

As for things in the next few months, earlier I mentioned the Australian Trout Foundation, and President Terry George is our guest speaker at the Kelvin Club on Thursday July 19. Terry's involvement in trout politics and all aspects of Victorian trout fishing is superb. He will be well worth listening to.

Following that we have the Annual Dinner, again at the Kelvin Club, on Friday August 24 with guest speaker Peter Morse. Peter needs no introduction. He is a celebrated fly fisherman, having introduced many people to fly fishing via his TV show *Wildfish* and his books and frequent articles in *FlyLife*. I remember Peter teaming with Simon Gawesworth

at the Red Tag pool a few years ago conducting a well-attended casting clinic.

Winter is obviously well and truly here and for some members attention turns to our lakes. Apart from the trout caught at the Lake Purrumbete event, I have not had a good report from any other Western or Central District lakes. Unfortunately!

Tight Lines,

Dermot O'Brien

The August Annual Dinner with Peter Morse

This year's annual dinner is on Friday, August 24, and will be held at the Kelvin Club. The cost is again $70 for members and their guests, and an invitation is included with this issue of *Fly Lines*.

Our guest speaker for the evening is Peter Morse, who is well-known to many of us. Peter is a highly regarded guide, writer, and casting instructor who specializes in saltwater fly fishing.

He grew up in Fiji where from an early age he fished from the family boat trolling handlines for mackerel, trevally, tuna and coral trout. His father and his grandfather were fly fishermen, and Peter has fly fished since the early '70s in freshwater and in saltwater. He has written extensively on the sport for magazines and has written three books.

Peter is well known by fly fishers in Australia through the *Wildfish* series, but has also taught fly casting for several decades. He is a Sage Ambassador and RIO Ambassador as well as a Certified Master Casting Instructor with the International Federation of Fly Fishers. He conducts fly casting clinics all over the country from novice level through to training other potential instructors.

Without prejudice, he chases with fly tackle whatever swims and has landed over 300 species on fly tackle. He has fished around the world from the jungles of Brazil to the flats of Mexico and Florida, throughout the South Pacific, to the chalk streams of southern England. His favourite 10 species are barramundi, bonefish, permit, trout, billfish, trevally, saratoga, blue bastards, queenfish and Murray cod.

Peter Morse – a master fly fishing the saltwater

In 2017 Peter was awarded the Fly Fishers International Mel Krieger Instructors Award.

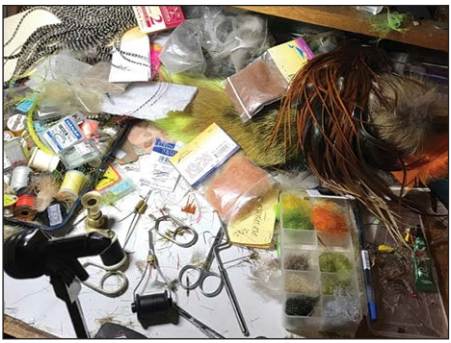
Peter is also a superb photographer, and his presentation at the annual dinner will no doubt be illustrated with stunning images of fabulous fish caught in exotic locations.

So come along on August 24 and enjoy a wonderful evening with great friends and a superb guest speaker.

The June Meeting Presentation by John Douglas

Thank you for the invitation to speak to you tonight. I have worked in fisheries now for over 30 years, and some of the projects I have been involved in include trout breeding (Snobs Creek Hatchery), cod breeding, barramundi (Queensland), Macquarie perch, trout cod, threatened species recovery, fish stocking, trout behaviour in both lakes and streams, trout population dynamics, and evaluating fishery performances.

But as well as being involved in the science and management of fisheries I have also thoroughly enjoyed fishing for trout. The photos below show my well-organised collection of fly tying equipment. I also like reading about trout fishing, as you can see from my library. One of my favourite authors is John Gierach.



John's well-organised fly tying gear

... and his library

I've been thinking about what I might talk about tonight. My job frequently involves driving distances with people or speaking at angling club meetings, and often anglers say to me that the fishing isn't as good this year as it was last year, or that throughout the season it seems to change. And the question is always – why?

Well, I don't know why, but there is some stuff we now know through the Wild Trout Program that has been running for a couple of years. We've had people talk about temperature and its effect on trout behaviour. I've been putting some of this material together and it's what I'd like to talk about tonight. You see, it's something that I think about frequently. I come across a stream and I think it looks really good, but then I mightn't catch any fish out of it. Now the problem is most likely to be me, but there are times when I think there should be fish there and they're not. And there might be good reasons for that. So tonight's talk is "some stuff about trout".

People like feeling comfortable. The other day I was up at Dargo sleeping in a swag. It was warm in the swag, but getting out wasn't good. Us humans don't like it too hot or too cold – there's a temperature range where we feel comfortable. And it's the same with trout. There are guidelines for how trout respond and comfort zones for them too. They feed in the temperature range from 3°C to about 20°C and optimal growth is in the range 13°C – 17°C. Above 20°C they don't feed and 26°C is the 'incipient lethal temperature'.

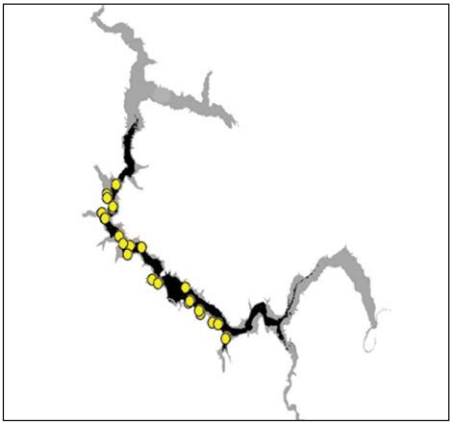
In my earlier days we were looking at trout behaviour in lakes and we did some research on Lake Eildon, which is an okay trout fishery in the winter but poor in the summer. But the trout are still there. We hung rows of thermistors (temperature measurers) in the water to measure the lake temperatures over a year. In winter

the water was cold and comfortable for trout all the way down to the level where there was no oxygen in the water. But in summer the surface temperatures were as high as 24°C, and were still about 20°C at 12 to 15 metres down. Trout don't like being out of their comfort zone, so we hypothesised that they would go down and remain between the hot water at the top and the no oxygen cold water at the bottom. So there was a limited region where they could be.

This is not so bad in Eildon because it's such a large lake, but for a small lake such as Hepburn it might be quite a different story.

We wondered if the trout actually went where we thought they'd go, so we took measurements of the actual depths of Eildon and got the results shown in the picture here.

The black bits in the picture show the comfort zone for trout, i.e. the area where the depth is between 15 and 25 metres. We also had some trout swimming around in the lake with tags on them so we could follow them around.



Lake Eildon – the dark area shows the water where the depth is 15 – 25 metres, and the yellow dots show where the fish were

The yellow dots in the picture show where the trout were – they were all in the 15 - 25 metre depths. So they were where we thought they might be, and it is clear that the distribution of trout in Lake Eildon is limited by the water temperature.

So if you fished Eildon in the summer months up at the northern end you would be wasting your time because there are very likely no fish there. Instead, you would need to find places that have access to deeper water, because that's where the fish will be.

John Hayes, who spoke at the Trout Conference last year, is a trout researcher in New Zealand who has done some really helpful modelling on drift feeding trout and river temperatures and growth. He suggested that trout in our rivers may not be as big as New Zealand trout because of the shorter growing season in our rivers.

He was interested in the movement and mortality of trout in a particular New Zealand river, so he put some tags on them, and as the summer water temperatures increased and flows decreased he tracked where these trout went and discovered that the warmer it got the less they moved. Most trout moved less than 1 kilometre (though a few moved up to 41 kilometre). Trout in relatively deep pools showed little movement throughout the summer. Movement declined steadily as flow decreased and water temperature increased, and 80% of fish did not move at all once temperatures were above 19°C.

When the water temperatures got hotter they left the shallows and just hung around in the deeper pools. Their distribution was linked to the pools and thus there was a patchy distribution of fish, and fishing water between the pools wasn't at all effective.

So people realised that trout need pools to get through the summer months. In some of our recent Victorian summers we've had low flows and high temperatures, so these pool environments are very important for our fish.

>>>

In the USA trout scientists have been looking at 'cool water refuges', and in one location they found that in the summers of 2003 and 2004 some 400 juvenile coho salmon regularly packed themselves into a 4 metre square area of cooler water near Crane Creek. Researchers had been identifying these cool water refuges by flying drones up rivers loaded with temperature recording equipment

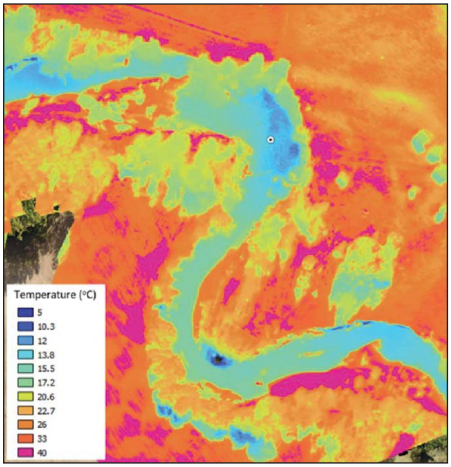
We've had a look at this same sort of thing here in the Ovens River. The CMA in the north-east got Melbourne University researchers to fly drones over the river.

The right photo above shows a section of the river and the photo below shows the temperature range in the same section. The deep blue sections indicate the colder water. Clearly there were cool areas and areas between them where the water was warmer. The researchers investigating our Ovens River got results that were very similar to what John Hayes had found in New Zealand rivers.

When the water gets warmer the fish go looking for these cooler areas, probably in the deep pools. The Ovens sadly doesn't have many of these classic deep cool water refuges because it was churned up by the gold miners using their dredges. But what this shows again is the importance of cool water habitat.

Another piece of research in Montana examined temperature and trout feeding patterns. Creel surveys were taken on two sections, an upper, cooler section and a lower, warmer section of the Madison River. Some 1,741 anglers were surveyed and the results showed that catch rates (for rainbow and brown trout combined) tended to decline as temperature increased. The percentage of anglers catching no trout increased significantly with increasing temperatures, with up to 50% catching no fish when temperatures were above 19°C. The final conclusion was that 'angling quality for brown and rainbow trout is impaired at temperatures considerably below the upper lethal

Aerial photo of a section of the upper Ovens River

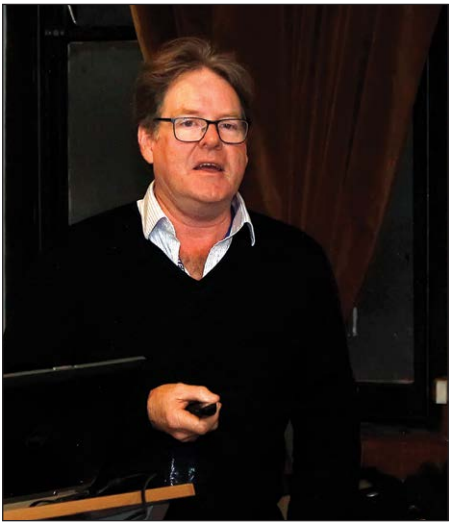


The deep blue sections represent the cold water

limits for these species', as the catch rate declined from about 16°C onwards.

John Hayes showed that trout have to feed more in summer because in the higher water temperatures they need to eat more food just to maintain condition. But as the temperature gets higher they eventually give up feeding and just hunker down and lay doggo.

Another important question is where trout get their food from. Alfred Dunbavin Butcher (a well-known



John Douglas speaking to his VFFA audience

Australian trout scientist) suggested that 90% of a trout's diet was nymphs and/or similar aquatic food. But some recent work suggests that this might not be the case. It might be true in terms of numbers of items eaten, but not necessarily for the energy contribution. The bigger food items become more important as a lot of a trout's energy comes from larger food items in summer, so terrestrial food becomes very important in those summer months.

Trout will still eat nymphs and other small aquatic bugs, but they will need more food and a grasshopper's food value might be the equivalent of 10 or 20 tiny nymphs.

The energy equation is very important. It's where they get their food from that matters. Grasshoppers are super important for our trout in the summer months. If trout have to swim around for their food then they burn up energy, and if they can't find enough food then their condition will decline. And then when it gets too hot they just hunker down.

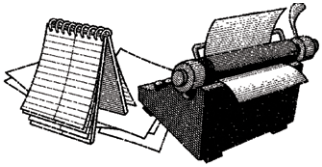
There was some really cool stuff done by of Shigeru Nakano, a Japanese scientist. He was interested to see how important terrestrial food was for trout as compared with aquatic food. To investigate this he built a cage over a river with mesh so that light could get through but bugs couldn't. So no terrestrial items could fall onto the river and the only food available to the trout was aquatic food. The fish here were mostly rainbows.

He found that the population of fish in this area dropped away over time because the carrying capacity dropped away. There wasn't enough food to support all the fish that had been there previously. The ecology changed too. The key findings were that terrestrial items were very important (being greater than 50% of the annual energy budget), and rainbow trout ate 77% of the total summer terrestrial prey and this was 73% of their daily food intake. When drift prey was scarce, fish fed directly on streambed insects. If algae eating insect numbers (nymphs) were low, then algae blooms occur. So if the riparian habitat was modified and this reduced the input of terrestrial bugs, trout were forced to feed more intensively on aquatic drifting prey. Trout population abundance is dependant of food, and hence there is higher fish abundance in forested areas compared to grassland.

The point is that if you want to have good healthy fisheries then you need good healthy riparian vegetation to provide the terrestrial food which is so important.

Getting back to our fishing, because fish seek colder water and therefore go deeper in the summer it's no good fishing in the places where they aren't. We need more cold water in our rivers, so it's important that we try to protect them through habitat restoration activities. Nowadays we put logs and rocks into our rivers, and when we put logs in we create scouring which creates better habitat for fish. And if you are not catching many fish then it is worth taking some temperature readings of the water and hence try to find where the cool refuges might be.

From the EDITOR'S DESK



" ... and when the weather serves to angle in the brook, I will bring you a silver hook, with a line of finest silk, and a rod as white as milk, to deceive the little fish." (The Faithful Shepherdess, 1611)

"Fly fishing is hardly ever as straightforward, or as consistently successful, as the picture most writing on the subject tends to paint – my own included. Writers can leave you with the impression they're city blocks ahead. That they regularly hook wagon loads of trout, and with maddening ease, have a giddy range of tricky techniques up their sleeves and complete mastery of them all. The truth is there's nobody out there who's fishing never grinds, whose touch never goes at times, who some days can't fathom trout any more than they could fathom an advanced equation in quantum mechanics.

Occasionally my fishing goes through purple patches and I do well, may even show fleeting (but always transitory) signs of brilliance. Naturally, the occasions I remember most, and consequently mostly tap into when I sit down to write, are the more successful ones ... Days when I failed – when I missed sitter after sitter, or repeatedly hooked the only tree in sight, or dropped an open box of dry flies into a fast run on a windy day for the second time – well, I conveniently tend to forget about them." (Tom Sutcliffe – Hunting Trout)

Thank you Tom for your honesty, and for a wonderful book. *Hunting Trout* is a great read. I've learned heaps about fly fishing from the books I've acquired, and the DVDs and the countless articles I've cut out of magazines and filed away for future reference (though I must confess that too often I don't get back to reading those wonderful insights I gathered so assiduously)

I've also learned heaps from the many friends and fishing companions I've fished with. One of these, and I have mentioned his name before, is Peter Scott. As I've also mentioned on occasions, in 1981 I worked in a school near Hamilton in New Zealand's North Island, and early on I attended a meeting of the Hamilton Anglers' Club. Peter was vice president at the time, and spotted this fly fishing greenhorn sitting up the back. I was fairly new to fly fishing at that stage, so Peter took me under his wing and took me fishing – on many occasions.

Peter was a skilled fly fisher, particularly with a nymph, and I learned so much from him. He also had a fairly useful job - he was a refrigeration mechanic and spent a lot of time visiting the dairy farms in the Waikato area, servicing and sorting their refrigeration problems. In the process he got to know the farmers, and thus gained access to sections of rivers on private property that were inaccessible to other anglers. So in Peter's company I got to fish some truly fabulous trout streams.

Peter also managed to organise for me a membership of TALTAC, the famous fishing club located on the banks of the Tongariro River at Turangi, and thus my introduction to this world-famous river was made in very proficient company.

I recall a time when I stayed at TALTAC with Peter and his son Ken, who was just 16 at the time, and already an incredibly competent fly fisher. Ken could cast prodigious distances in any wind, and was already a serious danger to the trout population of the Tongariro. Peter and Ken shared the task of guiding me on this trip, and I remember one morning fishing the Cliff Pool with Ken as my guide.

Peter in 1981 with a fine rainbow from the Tongariro

He had rigged me up with a heavy nymph and largish indicator, and pointed out the current edge I should cast along. I did, and the indicator came bobbing back happily. Ken looked at me with raised eyebrows and said, "Why didn't you strike?" I asked why I should have, to which he replied, "Well, you had three touches on your nymph on that drift, and you didn't strike for any of them." Whoops! Okay, I obviously needed to watch that indicator a whole lot more closely.

Ken fishing the Cliff Pool

On another occasion Peter took me to one of his fabulous Waikato streams. I had hooked and landed a brown of about 3 lb, and at this stage of my fly fishing life was keen to kill and keep every fish I caught.

I was reaching into the bag for the trout terminator (a short length of wooden broom handle) when Peter fixed me with a very stern look and barked, "Surely you're not going to kill that magnificent fish are you?" That was the point that my 'catch and release' habit began. And I'm now totally sold on the idea that trout are way too gorgeous and precious to kill.

In 2015 my wife and I spent a few weeks staying with friends in Auckland, and I was given a leave pass to slip away for a few days and stay with Peter and his wife Audrey at their home in Hamilton. So, 34 years after those glorious times in 1981 Peter took me out again to some of his favourite Waikato rivers, and showed me again how to fish them. Wonderful days and wonderful memories.

A couple of months ago I received an email from one of Peter's long-time fishing friends. Peter had just celebrated his 80th birthday, then tragically just a few days later suffered a massive stroke. He is now in a retirement complex, very ill, and a recent specialist assessment suggests that major recovery is 'very unlikely'.

Peter in 2015 heading to the next pool

This news was so sad. Peter and I have maintained contact over the past 35 years, and his regular Christmas cards and emails were always full of fun, reflecting his active lifestyle and positive outlook. To see him now so debilitated is indeed harrowing. A few months ago I was in Auckland for the

>>>

wedding of a granddaughter, and I managed to slip down to Hamilton for an afternoon to visit Peter. He was huddled in a wheelchair and had great difficulty moving and speaking. A tragedy indeed.

In paying this brief tribute to Peter and his influence on my life I'm very mindful that friendship and companionship are such essential components of our fishing lives. We learn so much from each other, and the shared experiences and comradeship and memories are way beyond the tally of fish we ever catch.

Tight lines,

Lyndon

Web Fish

Cast regularly at vffa.org.au

About the VFFA web site:

The VFFA web site has a comprehensive coverage of VFFA events, meetings , trips, …updated monthly making it easy to track dates and times.

Features of VFFA web site:

- Monthly Newsletter delivered to members in full colour.
- Live access to more than five years of past Newsletters
- Newsletter in PDF format for easy reading on computers / iPads / tablets & smart phones
- Newsletter in PDF format can be read & saved on iPad / tablets like eBooks
- Calendar of all activities can sync with all you digital device calendars
- Gallery of events - Photos & Event reports
- Where to fish directories: Victoria, Tasmania, NSW, New Zealand

2018 Warrnambool Fly Fishers Annual Dinner

VFFA members are reminded that they are invited to attend the Warrnambool Fly Fishers' Annual Dinner. This is a very special event, being a fish and game dinner that has earned a wonderful reputation over many years for the quality of the food on the menu.

This year's dinner will be held on Saturday, July 28, at the Warrnambool Racing Club Pavilion, on Grafton Road, Warrnambool. The cost for non-WFFC members is $80. It is a BYO wine and beer occasion.

Before dinner drinks with deep-fried crumbed abalone will begin at 6:00 pm, and guests will sit for the first course at 7:00 pm for the start of what will undoubtedly be another night of fabulous food and wonderful company.

Those wishing to attend should contact Jim Blakeslee on his e-mail address - jtblakeslee@westvic.com.au before July 20 to book a seat. Between July 20 and no later than July 27 guests intending to go should contact WFFC President, Adrian Jacobs, by calling him on 0437 620 972.

There is a limit of 65 persons who can fit into the venue at the Warrnambool Racing Club Pavilion and places are filling fast, so a prompt response is recommended.

Jim Blakeslee's contact details are Phone – 03 55625168, Mobile – 0437 983 421, and e-mail – jtblakeslee@westvic.com.au

Come along to our fourth conference about wild trout in Victoria.

It's free and a great chance to improve your trout knowledge and fishing success.

Conference topics include:

- Keynote speaker, Jim Fredericks, Chief of Fisheries, Idaho Department of Fish & Game, about trout fisheries management in famous American trout streams
- Rex Hunt about his trout fishing journey
- Status of wild trout in Victoria – survey results in streams
- Progress report on incubator stocking trials (3 rivers)
- Health cards for our best wild trout streams
- Climate and trout – forecast and ground truths
- Lure fishing southwest rivers
- Fishing tips from a guide, Phil Weigall.

We'll also outline how the State Government is investing a record $46 million into the *Target One Million* plan to grow participation and get more people fishing, more often.

A panel discussion will follow each session with questions from the audience.

When:

Saturday 11 August 2018, from 9.30am until 4.30pm

Where:

Darebin Arts & Entertainment Centre
Cnr Bell St and St Georges Road, Preston

Registration:

To reserve a free seat visit **www.vfa.vic.gov.au/talktrout**

Registering helps us plan seating and catering, which includes free lunch and refreshments.

Seats are limited so register early!

Your fishing licence fees at work

Target One Million
More Victorians fishing, more often

Victorian Fisheries Authority

VICTORIA State Government

Authorised by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne

Useful Websites

There are countless websites these days that are of interest to fly anglers, and we could fill pages with useful suggestions. One great example is the RIO website which has a library of short very professional teaching videos. These can be found at https://www.rioproducts.com/learn/make-the-connection/rio-tv

Two that I enjoyed recently were at https://www.rioproducts.com/learn/how-to-drift-a-soft-hackle, and related to this https://www.rioproducts.com/products/tippet/2-tone-indicator-tippet.

But once you figure out how to find your way around all the videos in their library there is a wealth of useful stuff there.

On the other hand, you could watch a fascinating and highly entertaining YouTube on the famous Tongariro Roll Cast where an elderly but very fit angler hurls roll casts huge distances across the mighty Tongariro River, then check this out: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FKcj6Ph-mc

Or just google 'Tongariro Roll Cast' and watch any one of a number of similar but shorter versions. It's a hard cast to master though.

This Year's Bruce Whitehead Western Lakes Challenge

... report by Peter Clayton and Bruce Houghton

This year's Bruce Whitehead Western Lakes Perpetual Trophy was held on the weekend of June 22 and 23, and five VFFA and seven Bairnsdale Fly Fishing Club members travelled to the Camperdown area to do battle. Hugh Maltby, Phil Connor and Dave Wakefield had arrived at Lake Purrumbete on the Wednesday, and then spent a fishless couple of days there before relocating to Camperdown and fishing Lake Bullen Merri on the Friday afternoon, and again not encountering a fish.

The fishing had apparently been good until about a week prior to the big event, and then it just got turned off, possibly due to a change in the weather. At Lake Purrumbete even the bait and lure anglers and danglers were not catching

Peter Clayton with a fine brown – but sadly not quite big enough

It was a cold and bleak winter's day

Jim Blakeslee rarely misses out

anything, whilst at Lake Bullen Merri on the Friday a few 0.9kg (2.0lb) fish were caught on bait. Bruce Houghton and Peter Clayton arrived at Lake Bullen Merri mid-afternoon on Friday and joined the others, with Bruce getting in some casting practice whilst Peter elected not to frustrate himself, given there was nothing happening.

After a very pleasant evening meal and a few drinks on Friday night at the Lakes and Craters Holiday Park, on Saturday at 9:15 am we met up with four members of the Warrnambool Fly Fishers' Club at

Hughie Maltby and Bairnsdale President Trevor Stow with the trophy. Trevor was holding it firmly.

Lake Purrumbete as the rain commenced. With the Warrnambool experts - Jim, Peter and Bob - bringing their boats and local knowledge, and Dave providing bank fishing expertise, hopes were high that some decent fish would be caught. Most of the Bairnsdale crew were also at Lake Purrumbete, but as we were to discover, only for the morning.

Trevor led the way with this winning fish

In cold, windy and drizzly conditions the fishing was tough, with no fish hooked until early afternoon when Warrnambool's Jim Blakeslee landed a fish of 0.5kg (1.1 lb). An hour or so later Peter Clayton, fishing with Bruce and Jim in Jim's boat, managed to hook and land a fish of 0.57kg (1.3lb), followed about 20 minutes later by one of 0.625kg (1.4lb). The two Davids had fruitlessly walked and waded along the eastern shore whilst Hughie and Phil had similar results fishing with Peter and Bob from their boats. So at 3:00pm the decision was made to head for shore to warm up. Our Warrnambool helpers retired for a well-earned rest, knowing they had got us "on the board" with two fish. Some of the Bairnsdale members had left Lake Purrumbete to try Lake Bullen Merri by the afternoon, and some caught fish there. Despite only two 'VFFA fish' being weighed in at Lake Purrumbete, some of the VFFA contingent were reasonably confident that we were in with a chance of winning the trophy.

>>>

After returning to Camperdown we had a very convivial gathering for dinner and drinks and a recap of the days fishing at a hotel in town. At this point we learned that Bairnsdale's President, Trevor Stow, had headed off to Lake Elingamite and caught a fish of 2.1kg (4¾lb), and Trevor Hawkins had been fishing somewhere with one of the Bairnsdale members and had managed to catch five fish, though none were heavy enough to compete with the one caught by Trevor Stow.

The social life was a great feature of the weekend

There was always the opportunity of Sunday morning offering possible redemption by the VFFA team, but at dinner on Saturday night some team members reluctantly agreed to reduce the fishing time on Sunday and have an earlier weigh-in time of 11:00am and a pleasant BBQ lunch beside Lake Purrumbete. This was apparently to enable the travellers from Bairnsdale to get home at a reasonable time.

At the presentation we learnt that the capture of Trevor Stow's fish was somewhat controversial, as it occurred whilst he was taking a 'nature break'. So at the time the fly was taken he had no hands on his fly rod. We presume that someone from the VFFA actually verified Trevor's fish and its size. Further discussion and laughs continued at the BBQ and congratulations were offered to the members of the BFFC for retaining the Bruce Whitehead Trophy.

Although we were unable to match or exceed Trevor's excellent catch and thus not wrest the trophy back from the Bairnsdale guys, all VFFA members thoroughly enjoyed the weekend. Our thanks to Hughie Maltby for his organisation and for speaking on behalf of the VFFA. At the presentation it was agreed that future Western Lakes events would be held on the last Saturday and Sunday in June each year (so next year's event will be on June 29 & 30).

Winter fishing – both teams well rugged up

Those Scotty Jordan Incubators

On Saturday, June 16, a surprisingly large number of eager volunteers descended upon the Snobs Creek hatchery near Eildon to assist in the process of filling some 60 Scotty Jordan incubators with fertilised trout eggs. Each incubator held 1,000 eggs, so at the end of the day some 60,000 ova were ready for distribution into rivers around the state.

Members may recall that just prior to this particular Saturday Terry Rogers had emailed members on behalf of the Australian Trout Foundation with an invitation for interested anglers to come and assist in this process. So, some ten keen VFFA members travelled to Snobs Creek on a freezing Saturday and were joined there by another 30 enthusiastic starters – individuals and representatives of a number of other angling clubs.

After a brief demonstration by hatchery staff we were let loose. It wasn't difficult work, though a bit fiddly, and after a couple of hours the job was completed. The 60 incubators were then stored in a tank for distribution in the following week, and we all retired to a warm room to enjoy a barbecue lunch together.

What was it all about? The Australian Trout Foundation had teamed up with the Victorian Fishing Authority and other recreational angling clubs to trial Jordan Scotty Incubators to find whether they were a viable method for stocking streams that have been adversely affected by bush fires, floods or human intervention. The incubators, after being filled with fertilised trout eggs, were then taken out and installed in two King River tributaries, the Jamieson River, Traralgon Creek, the Crooked River and the Upper Dargo River. The eggs had already been stripped at Snobs Creek hatchery, and the donor trout had been fin-clipped to record their DNA on a database. Electro-fishing will be undertaken in the chosen rivers in the following three years, and fish caught will be fin-clipped and their DNA matched against the donors' DNA to determine if the trout are the progeny hatched from the incubators.

While the staff at Snobs Creek are still waiting on the results of DNA testing from last year's trial, those who were involved in installing the incubators in the rivers last year have indicated that when they revisited the sites where the incubators have been placed they found congregations of small trout around where the incubators had been located. So, while we are still waiting on the official DNA results, there is a strong feeling that last year's use of these incubators had worked well. If the trial of

Julian Newton–Brown and Dermot O'Brien loading incubators

Hubert hard at work

>>>

these incubators proves successful then we have indeed found a very effective way of restoring trout populations in trout streams damaged by those horrific fires and floods that too often are part of our Victorian experience.

This looks a good spot

Neil Hyatt, hatchery manager, loading up the barbecue

Preparing the incubators for placing in the river

Loading the trays was delicate work, and a paint-brush was helpul

VFFA secretary Kevin Finn worked with Steve Wallace

Fertilised eggs – hopefully some four pounders in this lot

Matt Byrne, on the right in this photo, was demonstrating how the trays were to be loaded

This Month's Yarn ...

(… from July, 1962)

McTaggart wiped his lips and pushed his empty lunch glass across the bar for a refill. Pilks obliged and nodded to the barmaid whilst pushing a note across the bar.

McTaggart opined, "You know, the most resourceful piece of fishing I ever saw was by an old chap who taught me to fish."

"Tell us about it," said Alf. The others in the group nodded in anticipation.

"Well, it happened one evening some years ago," said McTaggart. "We were on the Barham down near Apollo Bay, and trout were rising all over the place to a natural white moth, but only to this particular insect. Old Monty, the chap I'm telling you about, didn't have a white moth, or even a Royal Coachman in his box, so he couldn't get a rise."

"Finally, he took out a cigarette paper, cut out two tiny wings with the point of his knife, and then stuck them to the sides of a spare Coch-y-bondhu he had, using the sticky gum on the paper to hold them in place. Within 10 minutes he had taken three fine trout on it."

"But," said Pilks, looking just a touch incredulous, "Wouldn't the water have immediately washed away the gum so the wings fell off?"

"Not at all," replied McTaggart. "He was fishing DRY… and yes, they were proper and fair dinkum dry fly fishermen in those days!"

Fly Tying 2018

Many members focus on fly tying in the winter off season and two highly successful VFFA fly tying clinics have been held so far this year.

The first was June 7 at the home of Richard and Judy Kos in Sunbury. Half a dozen members turned up, with both experienced tiers and novices alike happy to learn and share their skills. Kossy and John Pilkington tutored the group in techniques and what to look for in materials.

All the participants, having watched the masters, then got to work at their own vices on basic flies such as the Red Tag. And some pretty fine efforts emerged ... certainly good enough to attract a fish.

Judy and Kossy laid on homemade soup and sausage rolls for a welcome lunch. Magnificent!

After the lunch break attention turned to the Pot Scrubber nymph, and couple of mighty fine nymphs came off the vice.

The second day, on June 21, was held at John Pilkington's place in Clifton Hill. Four members turned up for the second clinic.

Kossy focused on hair wings and parachute hackles and the best materials for getting the best result. By the end of the morning session the skills of all those present had increased dramatically.

Not long after a hot soup lunch the day was wrapped up.

There is to be a third VFFA fly tying day on July 19, at the home of Rick Dugina in Flemington. Those wishing to take part can book a spot by phoning John Pilkington on 0407 356 676 or Rick Dugina on 0401 963 601.

These VFFA fly tying classes were instructive and delightful social occasions

Fly Fishing in Japan

... from Nick Taransky

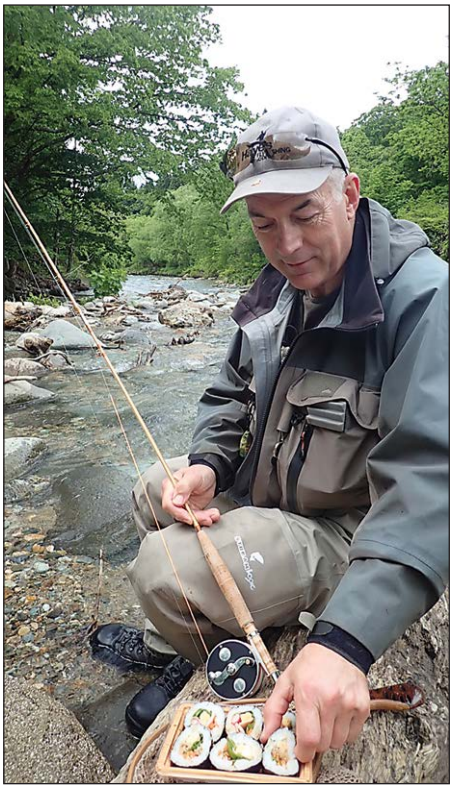
I've just returned from my third trip to Japan. My first trip, in 2012 as a stream dry fly angler and bamboo rodmaker, was literally a life changing experience.

From the perspective of dry fly stream angling, I saw a range of incredibly advanced techniques that were far beyond anything I'd seen or read about anywhere else in all my years of fishing. The Japanese anglers I met hold the tradition and culture of fly fishing in high regard, but have highly refined their approach to suit their own streams and native trout.

There are various ways that these guys (and girls) achieve drag free drifts on their high gradient, swirling rivers, but the pinnacle to me is the "Long Tippet Method", developed by Naoto Shibuya. This involves using leaders around 20 to 22 feet, fished off full loading, slow actioned rods. You might imagine this resulting in a slow, soft presentation, but it's the opposite - incredibly high line speed, with pinpoint accuracy while delivering large amounts of slack in the leader and tippet to give very, very, very long drag free drifts.

Other Japanese dry fly methods utilise shorter leaders (but still long by our standards - maybe 15-18 feet), and dynamic mending to defeat drag. I've really only scratched the surface of Japanese angling styles, but they have inspired me to the point where I'm now spending a serious amount of my time learning the Japanese language (both written and spoken). I can't see another way of fully understanding all of the elements of these techniques without being reasonably fluent in Japanese. Hopefully as I get better at both the language and Japanese angling I can translate and share what I learn into English.

A small but beautifully marked Japanese trout



David Hemmings enjoying lunch by the river

On my most recent trip I was joined by Peter and Lachie Hayes, and David Hemmings (who many will know from his guiding with Peter). I >>>

think I can speak for these guys having had a really good time there, and learning a lot too. One thing that I really love about travelling as an angler (aside from the fishing itself), is that it takes you away from the tourist route to the "road less travelled", and allows you to experience more of the authentic culture of your destination. On this recent visit our Japanese friends were wonderful hosts.

We experienced the diverse food and culture of the Akita Prefecture (including Karaoke, and hot spring Onsen baths). Some other sidelights of the trip included night-time fishing for Sea Bass under the bright lights of Tokyo, and a visit to a little tackle store which had the best collection of American and other classic tackle I've ever seen…

Fly tackle shops can be found in most countries

As a result of our visits, we in Australia are probably already ahead of the rest of the world in gaining an understanding of these techniques and adapting them to our own fishing. We are already tentatively planning for some of the leading Japanese anglers to visit Australia and run some workshops at Peter's lodge at Cressy in 2020.

I'm really looking forward to introducing these guys to Australia and the unique aspects of our fishery. I know they will love our streams and brown trout (Japan's native trout are Yamame - a relative of rainbow trout, and Iwana - a brookie-like char). But I'm more interested in how they will respond to the Tasmanian lakes - I don't think they will have seen anything remotely like them!

As a dry fly nut, the Japanese experience has revolutionised my thinking as to what is possible in getting drag free drifts in areas I've previously walked past. But maybe even more so, as a bamboo rodmaker, Japanese rodmaking has opened my mind to totally new styles of rods.

Much of my early development and learning came from American rodmaking and tapers, particularly classic American "dry fly" style rods. These are typically short (6½ to 7½ feet), with fine tips, and fast actions (fast for bamboo, anyway). I was also influenced by more "medium", "semi parabolic" tapers like those designed by Michigan master maker Paul Young. With these

The end product – two fine cane rods

rods as a starting point, over the past 15 years I've worked on developing tapers and actions specifically to suit Australian fishing conditions. My focus has been on rods for the sort of fishing that I personally enjoy: dry fly sight fishing to both cruising fish and fish on station. The requirements are accurate casts, often in windy conditions, on tight, overgrown small streams. Drifts need to be drag free, but because of the slow to moderate flow of most Australian streams, a conventional leader of up to around 14 - 15 feet is usually more than enough for the short to medium length drifts usually required. These rods will probably remain at the core of my own rodmaking and fishing.

But seeing the ability of longer, very full/soft actioned Japanese bamboo rods to control very long leaders and tippets,

A fascinating Japanese lunch for hungry anglers

while maintaining accuracy, has had me spending quite a bit of time at the bench working on prototypes based on these tapers. I believe that these will help to undo some difficult fish in tricky places, both in Australia and in New Zealand. Of course, the rods and Japanese casting techniques go together - it's not just a

Careful does it – planing the sections for a new rod

>>>

matter of picking up these rods and using your normal casting style… If it was easy, everyone would already be doing it! But for me, it's well worth the effort.

Another interesting aspect of Japanese bamboo rodmaking is the type of bamboo that they use. While most Japanese makers use the Tonkin Cane that is renowned as the standard worldwide as a rodmaking material, several Japanese makers use a number of other bamboo species to make rods.

Aside from Tonkin, one of the more popular species is Madake, which has a lower modulus and slower/softer feel than Tonkin. I've managed to source some culms (poles) of Madake, and have made around 10 different tapers using this material. Again, I still see Tonkin Cane as being the prime bamboo for most Australian and Kiwi applications, but I've learnt a lot from working with Madake, and it can be used to make some buttery smooth, soulful #3 and #4 weight rods.

Fishing and rodmaking are at the core of my life. But I think that what has captivated me most about Japan is a quiet respect, and devotion to quality, that sadly I see slipping away more and more in society these days. So, for me, my Japanese "journey" is really only just beginning. I'm planning to get there every year if I can, to learn more. I may even try and live there for a year at a time, on and off, teaching English ("Australian" English?) to better immerse myself in the lifestyle and culture of a rural community.

In the meantime I hope to share more with people outside Japan as I learn. On the tackle craft side of this, I am starting development of a website (in English), that will feature and promote leading Japanese rodmakers and other tackle artisans (reel makers, silk line makers, leather workers, etc), including selected items available for sale. The launch date is for early 2019 - I will hopefully have some more information on it in the coming months.

(Nick is running some rod-making classes. Details are as follows:)

Split Cane Rodmaking - Cressy 2018

The best fly rods are made here in Australia…. By… YOU!!!!!

Fly fishing in Japan – a very attractive section

2018 marks the 4th year of bamboo rodmaking classes at Peter Hayes' lodge at Cressy. Attendees have included everyone from 15 year old girls and 80 year old "gentlemen". No rod building or woodworking experience is required. Everyone who attends leaves with a beautiful rod that they have crafted themselves.

The $3200 cost includes a bamboo rod, made by you to take home (of course)! Plus meals and accommodation at "Hayes on Brumbies", all materials and use of tools to complete your rod, course notes, casting instruction from Peter Hayes, fishing time in the casting pond and on Brumbies, and more!!!

Full details are at: http://www.taranskybamboo.com.au/cressyclasses.html

Dates for this year are September 19-23 and September 26-30. Due to some recent cancellations there are places available in both classes. For VFFA members there is a $200 discount on remaining places for this year.

What past attendees have said…

'The combination of Nick's rod building experience and Peter's casting tuition in a purpose designed location, made for a thoroughly engaging and immersive experience. It was brilliant to be able to try a variety of bamboo rods, practice casting, and even catch fish in the casting pool, while at the same time building our rods.'

'Nick made the whole process thoroughly understandable and enjoyable, even for a complete novice like me. I'm really looking forward to putting my lovely bamboo rod to work on some of the local streams.'

'Nick provides a fantastic experience in learning to craft a bamboo rod, and the finished rod is of a quality that far exceeded what I thought was achievable from a first time rodmaker.'

Bookings and enquiries can be made with Nick Taransky at nick@taranskybamboo.com.au or 0428 366 879

The team with their handsome new cane rods

Trout Positive

(An opinion piece by Dermot O'Brien)

As trout fishers we have been doing pretty well since the end of the Millennium Drought. Local river and stream fishing has hovered between not too bad and good. Lake fishing in Victoria ... well, that is another matter!

We are coming up to the fourth Talk Wild Trout Conference. Now what's good about that? Well, what that means is really good information comes our way and we get to greet and meet the people who manage our fishery. All good. It is our golden opportunity through our numbers, our enthusiasm, our questions, to demonstrate to the Government and the good and committed people running the Victorian freshwater fishery, that we are passionate about trout.

Earlier this year the Chief Executive Officer of Fish and Game New Zealand, Martin Taylor, wrote an article in a Fish and Game publication under the heading of Praise For Our Trout. To me it was a well thought out article written by an expert and it weighed up the case for trout in New Zealand. His view: 'trout have an environmental, economic and cultural value'.

But here in Australia, like New Zealand, the anti-trouters are never far away. Trout are an introduced species … there is no point in denying that, facts are facts. Their argument is often centred on that fact that trout eat native species including galaxiids, etc.

Let's be up front. Trout do eat natives. However, natives eat trout. Natives eat natives. Trout eat European Carp. And Murray Cod and Yellow Belly could be considered to be at the top of the food chain. Trout are also a food source for native birds, etc.

So there it is. Trout is an introduced species along with many others, both good and bad. Sheep, cattle, deer, cats, dog and humans are all introduced. I think they/we are all here to stay, so let's make the best of it.

(If the conservationists want a cause, they might be better to focus on feral pigs in Australia. We do not see the problem this far south, but authorities say that more than 20 million feral pigs live in the top part of Australia. Pigs can carry many diseases, some which could do harm to our grazing industry and can even be transferred to humans.)

On the flip side of the introduced species debate; honeybees were introduced to Australia in the 1820's and honeybees cross-pollinate both crops and natives bush alike. Win win!

Back to trout. We know there are those who strongly believe there is no place for trout in Australia. But remember, we cannot blame trout for drought. We cannot blame trout for bushfires. We cannot blame trout for the increase in stream and river water temperatures. We cannot blame trout for the break-up of big properties into hobby farms and the proliferation of dams, all diverting valuable runoff.

And trout cannot be blamed for the loss of habitat, and that effects both trout and natives alike. The simple point is that man is responsible for the destruction of habitat.

At the end of the day, habitat is key. The challenge now is to hold on to the habitat for both trout and natives alike. A big challenge indeed.

A couple of years ago I was in New Zealand and during a week based in Gore I ran into another ten Melbourne

fly fishers. There may have been more Melbourne fly fishers about in this one town, but I didn't see them. It is anyone's guess as to how many Australian fly fishers were in New Zealand that week.

There were no guides involved, so IF we average out a week fishing at $2,000 per person, that could be $22,000 dollars going into the New Zealand economy and much of it into the economy of one small country town, Gore.

I ask you: would the towns of Alexandra or Mansfield like a $22,000 hit to a weekly economy? You betcha. How about $22,000 going into Corryong or Khancoban! Of course.

I believe it can and should happen. I say that so many people have got so much pleasure from trout for so long, that trout is a valuable asset on many levels.

Countless books have been published, some now part of Australian literary history. Magazines devoted to fly fishing exist and many businesses are based on trout.

So … trout and trout fishing are of economic, cultural and historic significance.

The drought and bushfires have come and gone, the State Government is investing in trout research and we are about to have another Talk Wild Trout Conference (August 11, in Melbourne). But, as trout fishers, trout devotees, here is another opportunity to visibly demonstrate our love and commitment to trout and a great wild trout fishery of the future.

Dermot O'Brien

To Stock Or Not To Stock

This is an article from a New Zealand publication *Fish and Game New Zealand*, originally published in 1991. It's an argument about whether additional stocking of streams that already has a viable population of trout is a good or bad thing, and also whether the "culling" of larger fish is a good idea for the general population of trout. The article was published in the South Australian Fly Fishers Association eBulletin for May, 2018, and is used with permission. The author of the original article, written 1991, is unfortunately not known.

For many years fisheries management in New Zealand was dominated by the belief that trout fisheries were not sustainable without releases of hatchery reared fish. The viewpoint promoted by Acclimatisation Societies, and readily accepted by anglers, was that there was a direct correlation between the numbers of hatchery reared juvenile trout released into a river and the numbers of adult trout that would be present in subsequent years. Natural reproduction was considered to be totally inadequate to sustain a productive river fishery.

With the encouragement of their scientific advisers Acclimatisation Societies carried out massive releases of hatchery reared fish. In 1931, for example, the Auckland Acclimatisation Society was advised by the director of the Freshwater Research Committee, Professor E. Percival, that it would be necessary to liberate at least two million fry annually to adequately stock the considerable mileage of water in the Auckland district. Professor Percival considered that such a high stocking rate was necessary, as natural reproduction was not sufficient to replace the large numbers of trout taken by anglers.

Trout fry were stocked because fisheries biologists believed there was enormous natural mortality of trout eggs >>>

occurring in the spawning redds. Trout reproduce when the female and male simultaneously release eggs and milt over a shallow depression in the stream bed previously dug by the female. The female then vigorously covers the fertilised eggs with coarse gravel and the "nest" formed by this activity is called a redd. The fertilised eggs within the redd take from 20 to 80 days to incubate, depending on water temperature.

When the egg hatches, the embryo, called an alevin, still receives nourishment from the yolk sac for several weeks. Once the yolk sac is exhausted, the young trout, now called fry, emerge from the gravel and starts feeding on aquatic insect larvae.

Fisheries biologists believed that the massive natural mortality of eggs within the redd was a significant factor limiting the number of trout produced by natural reproduction. Liberations of hatchery reared fry were therefore required to compensate for this mortality and thereby maintain a productive fishery that could sustain angling pressure. In fact, in many cases the number of fry allocated to a river was decided on political rather than biological grounds, as local angling clubs put pressure on Acclimatisation Societies for their "fair share" of the annual allocation of rainbow fry.

The effectiveness of stocking these trout fry was first questioned by Derisley Hobbs, a fisheries biologist working for the New Zealand Marine Department. During the 1930s Hobbs carried out research to determine the efficiency of natural reproduction for rainbow and brown trout in rivers throughout the South Island, and in the Auckland Acclimatisation district. His research showed that under favourable conditions, the natural reproduction of trout was a highly efficient process with an extremely low rate of mortality of eggs within the redds. Favourable conditions were considered by Hobbs to be the rule and unfavourable the exception in New Zealand trout streams. And he concluded that in most cases, trout populations produce far more fry than necessary to provide for their own maintenance.

Further research on trout population dynamics was later carried out by Radway Allen, a senior research officer at the New Zealand Marine Department. From February 1939 to October 1941 Allen studied the brown trout population in the Horokiwi Stream, a small stream near Wellington, with the aim of determining the numbers of trout surviving to various ages, their rates of growth, and the kind and qualities of food eaten. Allen's study was very influential and his conclusions were subsequently applied to both brown and rainbow fisheries.

Allen found that on average, one third of the eggs developing within the redd died from natural causes. Although this was a higher mortality rate than that observed by Hobbs, the numbers of fry produced by natural reproduction was still vast. For example, in the Horokiwi a single female fish, 35cm in length, would produce on average 1200 eggs and thus 800 fry. However, Allen found that the rate of mortality for fry was very high, with 97.5% dying within the first few months. Subsequent mortality rates were also high — each year about 80% of the trout alive at the beginning of the year died during the year from natural causes.

In contrast to the high death rate due to natural causes, Allen showed that anglers take only a very small proportion of the trout produced in the Horokiwi, and he believed this was probably true for most waters. Allen therefore advised fisheries managers that prohibitions on all lures and baits except artificial fly was a matter of sportsmanship and had no biological basis.

Allen also questioned the role of trout liberations, even after floods, observing that liberations on a small scale would not have an appreciable effect on trout numbers. And he was probably the first to suggest that liberations of large numbers of hatchery reared trout could actually be detrimental to a river fishery, because the increased competition for food could cause a reduction in growth rates and possibly even in the total weight of trout produced. It was thus competition for food that limited the growth of trout in the Horokiwi Stream.

Although floods were shown by Allen to do serious harm to river fisheries, causing abnormally high losses of trout, and especially fry and eggs, he believed trout releases were still not justified because of the substantial reduction in the food supply that occurred due to the scouring of benthic invertebrates from the river bed by flood waters.

Allen's most significant recommendation was that trout fisheries should be managed to produce the maximum weight of fish on a sustainable basis. It is therefore the total weight of trout caught by anglers that was important. The average size of these fish was secondary.

As an example, he advised that regulations should be set for the Horokiwi Stream that allowed anglers to take as many three-year-old fish as possible. He observed that most brown trout spawn during their second year and that this spawning effort alone was adequate to maintain the population.

Allen believed that it would be wrong to increase the size limit so that fish could not be killed until the fourth year, because the total weight of trout that could be harvested by anglers would be significantly reduced - the increase in average weight would not be compensated by the large number of fish "wasted by natural deaths".

Acclimatisation Societies were generally slow to appreciate the conclusions of Hobbs' and Allen's research, and most societies continued to produce large numbers hatchery reared trout. For example, the Wellington Society reared on average more than 750,000 trout per year from 1961 to 1966. And in 1961 the Auckland Society constructed a new hatchery designed to produce a million fry and a half a million fingerlings per year.

But by the late 1960s, the societies had started to question the wisdom of trout releases. Several carried out tagging programmes which showed that very few trout released into rivers were subsequently caught by anglers. Over a 10 year period from 1965 to 1975 the Auckland Society released 15,000 tagged rainbow fingerlings into local rivers, including the Waikato, Waipa and Waihou. The results were abysmal. Only four fish of legal size were reported caught by anglers. The Wellington Society had similar results, with the return rate of hatchery reared trout from 1967 to 1977 estimated at less than one percent. Following the results of these surveys Acclimatisation Societies diverted their efforts from hatchery liberations into habitat protection and enhancement.

With the recognition by Acclimatisation Societies that massive juvenile mortality was a natural occurrence in river fisheries, there was also a reduction in the effort spent on predator control. For many years the societies had spent considerable time and money on reducing the numbers shags, especially the black shag, in the belief that predation by shags on juvenile trout was detrimental to trout fisheries. But Allen's research suggested that shags were only taking a small proportion of the juvenile trout population. Indeed, Allen believed that shags can be beneficial to some fisheries by reducing juvenile trout

>>>

number and thus increasing the growth rates of the surviving fish.

The maximum sustainable yield concept promoted by Allen was obviously a useful tool for the management of a recreational fishery at a time when most anglers killed all legal trout caught. In theory, exploitation of a fishery by anglers can actually enhance productivity by removing the older, slower growing fish that have already spawned, allowing more food for the immature fish that are faster growing.

Therefore, liberal angling regulations that allowed anglers to maximise the weight of trout that could be harvested from a fishery were seen by fisheries managers as desirable for both brown and rainbow fisheries. Liberal regulations were also favoured because of a belief that they gave more people, especially children, the opportunity to go trout fishing. In addition, liberal regulations provided fisheries managers with the opportunity to produce standardised regulations that applied to all rivers within a region — certainly a desirable goal.

One example of the use of the maximum sustainable yield concept for trout management control occurred in the mid 1970s, when new regulations were introduced for the upper Waihou River above the Okoroire Falls. An investigation by the Freshwater Advisory Service of MAF had concluded that the angling regulations should be liberalised to allow anglers to utilise any lure or bait to harvest small fish. Consequently, the size limit was reduced to 22 centimetres, the season extended to the entire year, and bait fishing allowed. The aim of these changes was to reduce the overall trout population and thereby increase the size of the remaining fish.

In fact, over the next 10 years the numbers of large fish declined and small fish numbers actually increased. The new liberal regulations failed because they allowed anglers to increase their harvest of large trout, and especially in the upper reaches these fish were decimated. More small trout were being caught, but most anglers are not interested in killing small fish, even if these are of legal size. In practise, the maximum sustainable yield concept failed because it did not take into consideration the idiosyncrasies of anglers who are more interested in fish size than the total weight of the catch — more interested in trophies than in yields.

The concept that fishing pressure can reduce the adult trout populations is controversial and certainly not accepted by all trout managers. Until recently, it has been accepted without question that angling pressure on New Zealand rivers was not high enough to significantly reduce adult trout numbers. Research in North America had shown that it took angling pressure of at least 150 to 300 hours per hectare per season to have a detrimental impact on rainbow trout numbers, and angler pressure of more than 1,000 hours per hectare would totally decimate a fishery. For a river 20 metres wide, fishing pressure of 150 hours per hectare is equivalent to one hour of fishing per kilometre of river, every day for 300 days. There are few riverine rainbow fisheries that receive this level of fishing pressure in New Zealand, though there may be sections of rivers that do exceed this.

However, the North American research was carried out on rivers containing vast numbers of trout. In New Zealand, a few spring fed rivers do hold populations that approach the numbers seen in North America, but it was not until the mid 1980s when drift diving became an accepted management tool that it was appreciated how low rainbow trout numbers were in those New Zealand rivers that derive their flows from melting snow or rainfall. In these waters, the numbers of legal rainbow trout are

usually no greater than 20 to 30 fish per kilometre, and with considerable variation in fish numbers from year to year.

And yet, despite a relatively low trout population, a competent angler will often be very successful, especially at the start of the new fishing season when trout tend to be less wary. For example, two years ago Russel Gaston, a keen angler and fisheries ranger, told me that the 26 anglers spoken to on the Awakino River during the first three days of the new season had caught and released 125 fish and killed one.

This was over a 7 km stretch of river where the trout population had been estimated by drift divers at about 15 to 20 fish per kilometre, giving a total population of approximately 140 fish. These catch rates are realistic and comparable with other rainbow fisheries in the Waikato, though the figure of 125 trout caught is probably in underestimate, as Gaston would not have seen every angler. The number of trout killed would also appear to me to be unrealistically low, but Awakino anglers are well aware of the fragility of this fishery and certainly catch and release is the norm.

Therefore, it would appear that a considerable proportion of the trout population in the upper Awakino River were caught and released within the first three days of the new season, and at least some fish were probably caught and released more than once. Angling regulations on the Awakino River are relatively restrictive. In 1990, a two fish limit and a ban on bait fishing were imposed in response to a decline in trout numbers that occurred during the 1980s, probably as a result of overfishing.

Since the introduction of restrictive regulations, and the widespread adoption of catch and release by anglers, the numbers of large fish have increased considerably, and despite an increase in fishing pressure, these numbers appear to be sustainable.

As a result of the success of restrictive regulations on the Awakino, Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game banned bait fishing from virtually all its riverine rainbow fisheries. However, a low bag limit has only been imposed on one other fishery in the Auckland/Waikato region —the trophy headwater fishery in the upper waters of the Whakapapa River where a two fish limit is now in place. Within the Waikato, a considerable number of spring creeks exist that contain massive number of fish up to 45cm in length, with the occasional fish much larger. Perhaps for these fisheries, regulations are required that will encourage anglers to harvest small fish while strictly limiting the numbers of large fish that can be killed.

Restrictive regulations have been imposed by other Councils on riverine rainbow fisheries. In issue ten of Fish and Game New Zealand Jack Mackenzie informed us of the innovative decision by the Wellington Fish and Game Council to impose a maximum size limit on the trophy rainbow fishery in the upper Rangitikei River. An equally interesting move by this Council was its decision to allow a bag limit of only one fish in the upper reaches of the Rangitikei.

Restrictive regulations are an important management tool, but they are certainly not applicable to all fisheries. There is no universal panacea and thus we appear to be moving towards angling regulations that are fine-tuned for each discrete fishery, rejecting the long-cherished goal of producing standardised regulations for a whole region. This is a positive move that recognises the diversity of a prized resource of limited abundance but of high demand.

FLY OF THE MONTH

The Fur and Feather Streamer
(Details supplied by Ed Herbst in South Africa)

Scientists say that contrast and movement are the primary factors which influence the ability of trout to locate prey. The Fur and Feather Streamer utilises palmered rabbit fur plus marabou and chickabou feathers in three separate dubbing loops to create maximum movement.

The tried and trusted Clouser Minnow construction of dumbbell eyes tied on top of a long shank, straight eye hook to turn the fly into a hook point up position forms the basis of the fly. Tom Schuemaker of Wapsi flies had the necessary knowledge of centrifugal lead casting to produce the first dumbbell eyes in 1985. He sent samples to Bob Clouser, and Lefty Kreh named the resulting pattern the Clouser Minnow. The rest is history.

Dumbell eyes are now available in plastic, glass, lead and tungsten, and plastic bead chain eyes are available in two sizes from shops that sell roller and Venetian blinds. I cover them with Loon Fluorescing UV light-cured resin which gives them a lovely blue glow.

I use flat lead on the shank to assist the hook in turning over into a barb-up position.

The Gartside Soft Hackle Streamer with its palmered marabou construction was the basis of the fly, but the inspiration came from a technique which I saw demonstrated on Barry Ord Clarke's website which was headlined *Making a fur hackle and dubbing tutorial.* https://thefeatherbender.com/2014/06/05/making-a-fur-hackle-and-dubbing-tutorial-3/

Clarke has two videos on his Feather Bender website, the Bunny Bugger and the Opossum Worm, which demonstrate how to make fur streamers using the dubbing loop technique.

I realised that the immensely strong but fine 12/0 Semperfli Nanosilk thread or its Veevus GSP 100 denier equivalent would be ideal for the waxed dubbing loop into which the zonker strip fur and marabou were placed, but lacked a heavy dubbing spinner. Jay Smit of JVice fame was happy to make me one and I was on my way. http://www.jvice.com/

Bull Dog clamps could be used to insert the fur and feathers into the dubbing loops but purpose-built plastic clips from Marc Petitjean and Stonfo are easier to work with and for the marabou I use the Vosseler tool
https://www.troutline.ro/vosseler-xpert-clip-tool

The olive version could imitate a frog, the brown version a dragonfly nymph the black version a tadpole and the white version a minnow.

Three separate dubbing loops are used to construct the fly. The first dubbing loop uses zonker strip fur which covers the back two thirds of the hook. The second dubbing loop uses marabou which then veils the fur.

The third dubbing loop – much shorter – uses smaller grizzly marabou (chickabou) feathers dyed olive or brown to represent legs.

The dressing for the illustrated version is:

Hook: Ahrex NS150 Curved Shrimp hook in #4 or the Hanak H950BL in #6 - both straight eye hooks

Thread: 12/0 Semperfli Nanosilk or Veevus GSP 100 denier

Body: Crosscut two-tone rabbit strip in black/olive covers the rear two thirds of the hook. It is veiled by barred olive marabou (Veniard or Wapsi). The legs are olive chickabou (Wapsi or Veniard)

Eyes: Green BallZeyes with white eyes and black pupils. I fold the fur and marabou backwards as I wind them on and then pick these materials out with a bodkin to ensure that the fibres don't mat together in the water.

The materials and tools used by the author to tie his Fur and Feather Streamer

Jay Smit's heavy dubbing spinner

Stage one of the tying process:

Stage two of the tying process:

VALUED DONORS

The following made donations for the raffle at the 2017 Annual Dinner:

• Aussie Angler Tackle Outfitters • Armadale Angling • Australian Fishing Network
• Essential Fly Fisher Launceston • *FlyLife* Publishing • FlyFinz Fishing Tackle and Books • Gavin Hurley's Fly Fishing & Pro-Angler • J.M. Gillies Pty Ltd
• Mayfly Tackle Pty Ltd • Millbrook Lakes • Peter Hayes• Ray Brown Onkaparinga Flies • Stevens Publishing Pty Ltd • The Flyfisher Tackle Store Melbourne
• Hook Up Bait & Tackle •

VFFA 2018 meetings & other activities

July 2018

2 Monday	Council Meeting – 6:30pm
19 Thursday	General Meeting – 8:00pm at the Kelvin Club Guest Speaker: Terry George from the Australian Trout Foundation
28 Saturday	Warrnambool Annual Dinner

August 2018

6 Monday	Council Meeting – 6:30pm
24 Friday	Annual Dinner, with Guest Speaker Peter Morse (Well-known Australian writer on fresh and saltwater fly fishing)
25 Saturday	President's Casting Day at the Red Tag Pool – 10:00am

September 2018

1 Saturday	Rivers open again to trout fishing
3 Monday	Council Meeting - 6:30 pm
16 Sunday	Casting Instruction Day at the Red Tag Pool (to be confirmed)
20 Thursday	2018 Annual General Meeting – 8:00 pm

October 2018

1 Monday	Council Meeting - 6:30 pm
7 Sunday	VFFA annual visit to Thorpdale to fish the Latrobe Valley stocked dams as guests of the Latrobe Valley fly fishers
18 Thursday	General Meeting – 8:00 pm at the Kelvin Club, Guest Speakers: Kristina and Adam Royter, New Zealand fishing guides.
26 – 28	Annual Warrnambool trip. Details to be confirmed in future issues.

November 2018

1 Thursday	Date tentatively proposed for dinner with Simon Gawesworth and other guest speakers.
3 Saturday	Date proposed for Simon Gawesworth to conduct a casting clinic at Northern Suburbs Fly Fishing Club's Casting Pool
12 Monday	Council Meeting - 6:30 pm

December 2018

3 Monday	Council Meeting - 6:30 pm
6 Thursday	Annual Christmas Dinner with guest speaker John Philbrick (VFFA past president, life member, editor for 13 years, and highly skilled and experienced angler)