

# ROTORUA ANGLERS ASSOCIATION

*December 2022*

**NEWSLETTER**



Chris and Jenny Taylor on Lake Tarawera on a perfect day. Photo: Chris Taylor

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***Contribution Deadline: 20<sup>th</sup> of each month***

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*The content and comments in this newsletter are those of the authors or by participating members and not necessarily those of other Association members*

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The end of 2022 is fast approaching and I wonder where the year has gone in such a short time. Ahead of us are parties, summer (hopefully), Christmas and holidays. Rika and I will be dog sitting Lucy, a stout little Jack Russel, while her family camp out at Opotiki coast. The clubhouse will closed for a while.

This week one of our good friends got pretty ill and we thought we might lose her. This makes one appreciate what we have: health, we can relax, we can fish and enjoy the outdoors. Also we build up friendships among the anglers, and one day we look back and say: hey, this is my circle of friends. It was great to hear from Alf again, as he was quite tickled with Gwen's last article. For those still wondering, he is 92, but having a challenge with macular degeneration. All the best, Alf.

The KFO's are now finished for the year, and everything went well, with both happy kids and parents. All the Kilwell rods were won by kids catching tagged fish. The smoker was a hit, where folks could have a taste or take a smoked fish home. An interesting fact was the pond fish stomachs at times being absolutely full of stones. This shows they suck the pellets from the bottom and in the process also ingest the stones. These stones will come from the gravel pathways. Could we rake them up from the bottom?

The association's finances are still sound and the committee keeps a close eye. For next year we will not have a printed calendar, but will draw one up and put it on our website. Both Rika and I have always lived with a paper calendar, so lets see how it will go. Due to so many trips being cancelled this year, we need to conjure some magic formula for outings in the coming year. Roy Coulson now arranges trips for Taupo and says we can join them on these trips. John has built up our website to be one of the best, so please develop the habit of looking at it more often. Thanks John. Chris has fished Tarawera quite successfully and been generous to bring some vacuum packed smoked trout to the clubhouse. These packs disappear quickly.

Larry and Gavin have made seating in the clubhouse more comfortable, and the raffles provide entertainment and smiles if your number is the lucky one.

# FISH OF THE MONTH

A rainbow trout was caught by Ian Ferguson at Te Kopiha Bay, Lake Rotoiti on 11 November 2022. He was jigging from an kayak. The fish's weight was 3.05kg, Length 61 cm and a condition Factor of 48.5.



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## **DECEMBER UPCOMING EVENTS and REMINDERS**

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| Sat 3rd    | Ngongotaha Stream Team from 9 am. BBQ midday                     |
| Mon 5th    | Fly tying. Clubhouse 7pm   |
| Thurs 15th | Committee meeting  |
| Fri 16th   | Christmas dinner 5pm for 6pm.                                    |
| Fri 16 th  | Club closes for the holidays. Club reopens on Friday 13 Jan 2023 |
| Mon 23rd   | Dark moon  |

There will be no January edition of the newsletter. The deadline for the February edition will be Friday 20th January.

# THE KILWELL # ONE—HALF

The Kilwell # One—half is an update on an old favourite at Lake Rerewhakaaitu, where the smelts are smaller on average. It spares us the agony of tying Killer flies where one, two, or three PAIRS of DOUBLE feathers, all with a strong white stripe are required and all must be in perfect (grr) alignment. In this variant, tied on a small #10 hook, there are only two feathers, one on each side, to do the whole job. Therefore, there is a single pair of feathers with no matching. Freedom!

## DIRECTIONS:

- Hook: #10, Kamasan B175 or similar
- Thread: 6/0 black
- Tail: calf tail, dark brown or black
- Body: red or yellow wool. Pull off two strands
- Wings: one striped partridge feather each side at head end

## PROCEDURE:

- Cover hook with thread, from eye to rear above barb
- Tie in sparse tail, as long as the body of the fly
- Tie in wool, twist a bit, and wind to just short of eye
- Now tie in one striped feather to one side of the hook at the eye, then another opposite, the feathers enclosing the body. Whip finish. Done!

Fish slowly, with pulls and pauses. An intermediate line is best.

Thanks also to Peter Corson, who supplied us with California quail neck (shoulder?) feathers with a strong white stripe, fully equal to the partridge.



The Kilwell # One—half. Photo: Colin Cox

## ON THE RANGITATA RIVER

Ian Ferguson

Last month my wife and I visited our son and his family at the 960-hectare farm he manages on the banks of the Rangitata River at Klondyke, 30 minutes inland from Ashburton, as it emerges from the Rangitata Gorge. The top end of the farm is just above the intake for the Rangitata Irrigation Scheme and extends 5 km downstream. Roger Bowden advised me to just take my soft bait set up, that is a braid running line connected to 5m of 3.25 fluoro. The braid enables the line to cut through the water column getting the lure down quickly. I had also read an article in the Fish and Game Special Issue Edition 49: “Going with the flow – soft baits in rivers and streams.” This was very informative.

On visiting the Ashburton Hunting and Fishing shop, they advised me to use a Savage Gear cannibal trout paddle tail soft bait or a minnow soft bait. Starting above the fish screen at the irrigation intake I meandered my way downstream over the next five days.

The fishing technique involved casting across the current, holding the rod high as this straightened the line much quicker and prevented a large loop in the line being formed. As the line got closer, parallel to the shore, I slowly lowered the rod and began a slow retrieve. At first, I used a small gold and black toby but only got the odd hit. Then I landed a tiddler and a 40cm rainbow using the minnow soft bait. However, when using the cannibal soft bait, I started to consistently hook and land smaller trout, both brown and rainbow, between 35 to 45 cm long. Whilst doing some research on fishing blogs, one technique was to cast up into the rapid and try and entice trout waiting below. The idea was to try and imitate a wounded fish, but this led to getting lots of snags and needing to often retie the braid and fluoro. I wasn't confident in doing this so just used at first a small swivel connecting the braid to a metre of fluoro. This really cut down the success rate so I just had to practise using the double uni knot till I could confidently tie the knot on the riverbank. There are many different connecting knots, but this was the simplest and didn't let me down. So, I mainly cast across stream and gradually my success rate improved. Using the cannibal soft bait required a slow even retrieve but the minnow needed a jerky retrieve as this imitated a wounded fish.

A point made in one blog I read was that you only make 2-3 casts in each spot as you work your way downstream. This sped up my progress going down the river and I improved my reading of the current. In each pool downstream of a rapid or along a main flow I would usually hook fish. The cannibal soft bait was extremely effective in finding trout. Travelling light meant no waders so standing in 8-degree temperature was only a short-term option.

After not spin fishing for a long time and never having used a soft bait on a river before, it certainly was a challenge and I only scratched the surface of possibilities. Another challenge was learning to tie the double uni knot beside the river after a snag. The next challenge will be to learn more about the river and how to best catch larger fish. My son welcomes anglers accessing the Rangitata across his farm and it is certainly a beautiful part of the country.



A typical Rangitata rapid. Photo: Ian Ferguson



A spectacular scene with the main Rangitata flow pushing against a cliff. I took fish out of the pool to the left and the one downstream from the cliff. Photo: Ian Ferguson



Soft baits used

Top – Savage Gear Cannibal

Bottom - Minnow

Photo: Ian Ferguson

## LAKE TARAWERA FISHING MEMORIES

Alf Hoyle

1.

The articles on poaching in the last edition of the newsletter brought to mind humorous incidents many years ago. I used to fish with a Tarawera legend, Boise Pore, who is long gone. He had a reputation, completely unfounded, as being a bit loose around fishery regulations. At the time, we had a very enthusiastic wildlife ranger called Foster Hamlett whose favourite hunting ground was Tarawera. Boise used to complain that no sooner did his fly hit the water than Foster popped up to inspect licence and gear.

In the 1960s, during one lovely evening late in the season, we approached the Wairua Stream just on dusk. There was not a boat or rod in sight. Boise manoeuvred the boat off the stream and called out, "How's things Foster?" To our delight, a familiar head appeared over the raupo and Foster appeared. We shared a flask of tea between us and peace was restored, but what dedication to duty.

2.

In the 1970s, in my younger days, opening day on Tarawera was a big event. At the time I was host on a radio programme, Lake and Stream, on Radio Geysersland every Thursday night and on National Radio on Saturday morning. It was financed by Hamills. During this particular opening, Radio Geysersland requested that we had a reporter on my boat to record any highlights of the day. Also on board was a friend, a well-known local solicitor who later became a District Court judge.

At about 11 am, we had six fish in the bin and the reporter had plenty of exciting stuff on tape. At this stage we were approached by a fishery inspector, Pat Burstall, whose job was it was to check catches and licences. He was also the Conservator of Wildlife and the Head of Fisheries. He knew me well. He measured our catch and shared a beer. The reporter was ecstatic at this turn of events because it made for a better story. As the Conservator's boat moved into the distance, my solicitor friend said,

“That was a close shave.”

“Why?” I asked.

“I forgot to buy a licence.”

The solicitor is now in his 90s and I continually remind him of this occasion.



The Central North Island Youth Pipe Band performs at The Landing, by Lake Tarawera on opening day in 2016. Photo: Mark Taylor, Fairfax NZ

# THE ROTOITI HUNCHBACK

By Pete Otto

A while ago I was fishing Ruato bay and caught this fish near the shore on floating line. I was intrigued to know what caused this misshapen fish. The dissection showed a curved backbone. As to the cause one can only speculate. It must have happened while young. From the fish truck? Was it a shag when the fish was younger? Few fish can get away from a hunting shag, so if he was caught and bashed on a stone or log, how come the shag would leave it again? You figure it out!



The Rotoiti hunchback trout about to be dissected. Photo: Pete Otto



A piece of string marks the spine. Photo: Pete Otto

## MANGANUI-O-TE AO RIVER TRIP

By Joe Fleet

(Joe organised this trip years ago. The club has not been to Manganui-o-te Ao for some time. Will this article from the past encourage some club members to think about going again? See: <https://nzfishing.com/taranaki/where-to-fish/manganui-o-te-ao-river/>)

This is arguably one of the best nymph fishing rivers anywhere in New Zealand. Its source is just below the crater lake on Mount Ruapehu, and in times when the mountain erupts the river is polluted, killing all fish and aquatic life over many kilometres below the mountain. This has not happened for some years, so right now fishing is quite outstanding. Its health is demonstrated by the large population of blue duck living there. These birds feed only on aquatic insects and

for many years the Dept of Conservation has done sterling work in the area of protecting these birds.

About 15km of river is accessible in the middle reaches. About 4km north of Raetihi on SH4, turn left into Ohura Road and follow it for 8km to reach the river. The Makakahi, Ruatiti and Pukekaha Roads branch off Ohura Road to the lower, middle and upper reaches respectively.

River access and a free camping area are available at Ruatiti Domain. Bridge crossings also provide access. A large sign at Ruatiti Domain shows the various property boundaries along the river and anglers must get permission from the appropriate landowner. Landowners phone numbers are included in Fish & Game's Ruapehu Sports Fishing Information pamphlet.

The boulders and rocks in this river can be very slippery, so a wading stick is essential but the river can be crossed in many places with care. Any weighted nymph will do, like most nymph fishing, getting down amongst the stones along the bottom is the story. FELT SOLE WADING BOOTS ARE A NO, NO IN THIS OR ANY OTHER RIVER and the cleaning of all fishing gear is still required when moving between different waters. You will need to supply your food and drink plus a sleeping bag and pillow and a tent or campervan well.



# TROPHY FISH REGISTRATION

John Olds, the Club's web coordinator reminds members that they do not have to fill out a paper form for trophy registration. There is an electronic form on the website that mirrors this form and is much more convenient — <http://rotoruaanglers.org.nz>



The Stream Team had a cabbage tree planting day in November. L to R: Joe, David, Gavin, John, Julian and Ian. The flowering plants will eventually attract birds all along this stretch of the Ngongotaha river.



John Olds with his fly tying station



Joe and Brian sharing the raffle