



Sonoma County, California
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Scott Thomas, RRFF member
Landing his first New Zealand Brown Trout. Which one
do you think looks more excited? Story page 3.

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www.rrflyfisher.org

President's Message By Penelope Gadd-Coster

April was a very special month for many of us in the club. I participated in several new-to-me events. April also brought four new members to the club. Welcome! I cannot wait to see what May brings.

The wild winter weather we have recently experienced in Northern California has slowed down opportunities to fish. Some of our club fishing events have had to be postponed. New future dates have been chosen to keep our annual number of RRFF fishing outings scheduled.

In the meantime, while waiting for the rivers and lakes to clear up:

I like to watch for the return of the Ospreys. Every year I wait the arrival of these magnificent raptors. My husband photographs them, I watch them for pleasure. They are an amazing bird and a delight to watch. I enjoy watching Ospreys and other birds too, and mammals during my fishing outings. I fish and enjoy the gratification of occasionally seeing those animals and how they interact with our waterways.



Penelope & guide on the
lower Sac. River.

Spey-O-Rama—April 21-23, sponsored by the Golden Gate Angling and Casting Club—I couldn't make it this year. But next year I hope we might be able to gather a group that want to attend and travel together to the event...maybe a little fishing on the way? Penelope

The fish eggs were ready to be distributed on April 5th. I joined other RRFF members at Sonoma Water in Santa Rosa to collect the eggs and distribute them to classrooms around the County. There were many insulated cups with steelhead eggs meticulously prepared by the employees at Don Clausen (Warm Springs) Fish Hatchery for distribution that day.



Steelhead eggs in transport cups & fish food packets.

I had 7 cups filled with precious eggs to transport to Petaluma. There Alan Espinosa picked up 4, one for a Petaluma school and 3 for Rohnert Park. I delivered the eggs to one classroom at Sonoma Mountain Charter School. The teacher, Chris Gonzales was an old hand, and his students were quite excited to get the delivery.



Harvest Christian Elem. School children, Petaluma.

Then, I also delivered eggs to two classrooms at Harvest Christian School. The kids and their teachers were thrilled with the delivery. It was a wonderful experience stepping into the elementary school world to give the kids an opportunity to learn more about nature and our role in keeping the anadromous steelhead population healthy and plentiful in the

Russian River and its tributaries. **Jane Stone, RRF Member.**



Poster from students at Harvest Christian School, Petaluma.

Fly Fishing South Island, New Zealand Scott Thomas

I'm excited! New Zealand's South Island Brown Trout are everything I have heard about and much, much more. The photo of the Brown Trout on the front cover was my first day out with my guide and only 30 minutes into that day. YES, a wonderful feeling to land that fish so early in my fly-fishing adventure! WOW!

The South Island is the Mount Everest of trout fishing. It has more unspoiled trout streams per area than any other country on Earth. I was fortunate to fish several of them, including the Matakiki, Buller, Motupika, and Owen Rivers. I was also very lucky to fish several private waters. The west coast rivers were loaded with brown trout. Rainbows were in the east coast rivers. When I was sight fishing with my guide, we did not see another person for 8-10 hours per day while hiking 4-5 miles of riverbanks of those various rivers. It was almost unbelievable! We had a SAT phone for emergencies. Snakes and bears do not exist on the island, so we weren't concerned about being bit or mauled.

I had the opportunity to travel to the South Island and pursue these large brown trout as a retirement gift from my former employer. I had heard about the well managed and understated luxury Owen River Lodge (ORL). It was on my bucket list when I retired. So, in

2020, when I retired, my former employer asked what I would like after 25 years with them? I told them, an ORL fly-fishing trip. It was settled and I reserved a cabin at that lodge. Unfortunately, because of Covid, I couldn't go until February 2023.

The Owen River Lodge is in the northwest region of the South Island, and centrally located to many rivers. My guide from the ORL would meet me after breakfast. We would travel the small two-lane highways a short distance each day and then he'd shove it into 4-wheel drive for several miles on unpaved backroads in his Toyota Hilux to the various fly-fishing rivers. When we came to a river, we would set out to sight fish. The guide would spot trout and I would cast to them. I averaged hooking about 7-9 fish a day but landing only 3 or 4 as they were fighters and always ran my line out. I fished with a 6-weight rod and line with 12-18 feet leader.

Fly patterns ranged from #12 Cicada dry fly, #12 or #14 olive stimulator, parachute Adams #14, San Juan red worm #14, and copper hares' ear #16. I primarily casted dry flies to rising fish. It was very fun watching those beautiful browns take the Cicada dry fly!

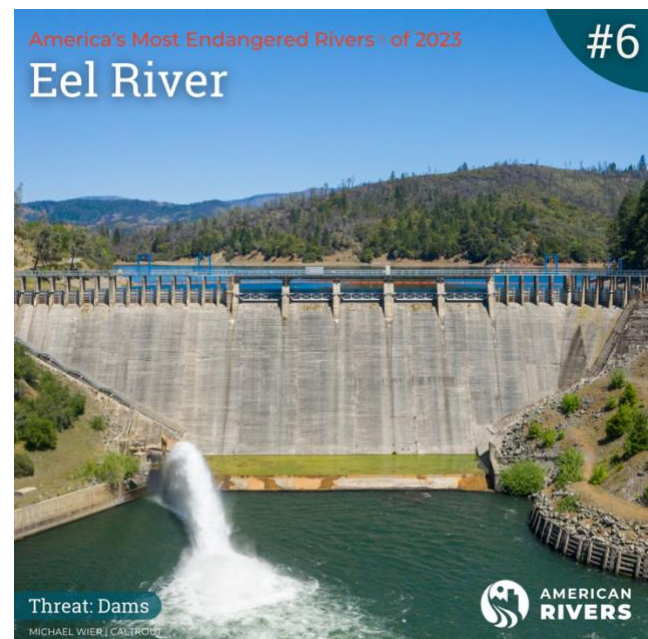
I have been in the construction business my whole working life and grew up fishing in the Midwest. I learned fly casting and fly fishing in 1992 from the firemen in Marin County while building their new fire house. I love fly fishing. It is a great sport. And it is nice being a member of the RRFF club. I have learned more about the sport from the great folks in the club. Practicing and listening to other club members are very rewarding. I truly like the environments that I travel to for beautiful trout on my own and on outings with the RRFF club. Forests with rivers and lakes are always very pure and clean. I adventure to Alaska and Montana when I can, but mostly love to fish my home waters of Northern California, primarily, the Lower McCloud River.

It was quite an adventure going to New Zealand for a month and traveling and exploring the South Island. I am very grateful. I can now say it was a truly inspiring delight and can be checked off from my Bucket List.

America's Most Endangered Rivers The Eel River, 2023 By Charlie Schneider

As anglers in Northern California, we know that the Eel River is a special place. Its emerald waters have long been a focal point of fly fishing for steelhead in California. But the Eel River is more than just a place to fish. It is a crucial part of the larger ecosystem that sustains North Coast residents, providing clean water, habitat for fish and wildlife, and other important ecological services.

Recently, [American Rivers](#) listed the Eel River as the sixth out of ten Most Endangered Rivers in America for 2023. While this distinction might seem damning, it should be seen as a significant recognition of the Eel River's importance as a legendary steelhead river, and a call to action to restore it for future generations. It is a reminder of the many challenges facing our rivers, and the urgent need for us as anglers to work together to address them.



Cape Horn Dam, Eel River.

Unfortunately, the Eel River is facing numerous threats that put its health and vitality at risk. These include pollution, overuse of its waters, climate change and two obsolete dams that block access to its headwaters – dams that also supply water to the Russian River.

But despite these challenges, there is reason for hope. The listing of the Eel River provides an opportunity for us to come together and make a difference. It is a chance for us to raise awareness about the importance of the Eel River and the threats it faces, and to advocate for policies and practices that will protect and restore it.

And, importantly, it's a chance to update our water supply infrastructure to meet the moment. We know much more now about fish biology, ecology and certainly climate change than we did in 1906 when the Cape Horn Dam was built.

The fact is these dams are falling apart. They're old, they no longer generate electricity and PG&E recently announced Scott Dam is seismically unsound. They will never again fill the reservoir to capacity over safety concerns.

We also know a dam free diversion could still significantly improve the health of the Eel River while helping to meet water demands in the Russian. Water users are currently working to understand if it makes sense to maintain a diversion or to make up for the lost water through a suite of other means like conservation and groundwater recharge, strategies we now understand to often be more cost effective and reliable than surface water storage and large dams.

As anglers, we have a special role to play in the effort to restore one of the North Coast's most important rivers. We are a community of people who love wild fish, and who understand the importance of preserving them for future generations. We can use our collective voice to speak out in support of Eel River dam removal, and to push for policies that prioritize its protection and restoration. We can also work to promote responsible water uses practices in the Russian River which will reduce our demand on imported water and improve conditions for Russian River fish.

The listing of the Eel River as one of Americas Most Endangered Rivers is both a challenge and an

opportunity. It is a reminder of the threats facing our beloved rivers, and a call to action for us to come together and make a positive difference for California's anadromous fish. You are invited to join me and become involved. [Click](#) to reach me.

This Year's Spey-O-Rama

By Mike Spurlock

Each year, the Golden Gate Angling and Casting Club hosts the World Champion Spey Casting Contest at Golden Gate Park at their casting ponds. This contest has spey casters from all over the world that come to see who can cast the furthest using a 15 ft. spey rod while standing in the water (approximately 3 ft deep). The contest lasts Friday, Saturday and Sunday in April and is free to attend for viewing. The winning caster is the one who can cast 4 casts the furthest—single spey, roll cast, each left and right-handed. Men's top contestant this year was Travis Johnson from Oregon who averaged 178 ft on his 4 casts. He had won the contest several times before.

Fly of the Month

Hi-Vis Griffin Gnat

By Mike Borba

Here's a good dry fly for our outing to Baum Lake. Other flies for Baum can be found in previous editions fly of the month.

Tying Notes

Hook: Tiemco 101 size 16 to 20

Thread: black 8/0

Indicator material: orange or pink poly yarn

Body material: peacock herl

Hackle: grizzly hackle

[Click here](#) to view YouTube for tying instructions.

Important! Casting Pond Cleanup

Doug Mackay

On Saturday, May 13, we will gather for a much-needed cleanup of our casting pond. Scrubbing the bottom of the pond requires at least 24 volunteers. Push brooms required. **We need volunteers.** If we have full staff by 8:00 AM, we should be done by 11:00. Please bring rubber boots and a push broom, a hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, and a sense of humor.

An Invitation to Build A Personal Fly Rod By Rick Baker

Some choose to build their own fly rod as a fun and relaxing hobby. However, some choose to base their rod building choice on potential cost savings. Others build their own rods to obtain the performance they need for a specific fishing application. For most, it is balance between the three.



Finished custom rod, Tarpon Tamer.

Whether you're considering building a rod as a hobby or necessity, building your own fly rod can be rewarding. Best of all, it is a fully customized rod made by you.

I wanted to let RRFF members know that the club has a wrapping stand, rod turner, rod support stands and a small selection of tools available for checkout that will help to get you started. No experience required. Along with voluminous google and video resources, I would be happy to show you how everything works from suppliers, selecting blanks, components (handles, reel seat, guides), splining, assembling, and wrapping techniques.



Some of the tools available to RRFF members.

If this is something that may be interesting to you, let



It's all in the details.

me know and we can work to get you set up and on the road to building your first fly rod. If enough people are interested, we can coordinate a rod building clinic over a weekend or several weeks. [Click](#) to reach me.

Casting for Recovery Retreat 2023 By Paul Matzen

This year's Casting for Recovery (CfR) retreat was held on April 7, 8 and 9 at the Indian Creek Lodge in Douglas City on the Trinity River. With all the recent rain and snow, the CfR retreat was almost cancelled because of the high river flows. Over the past several years, several retreats had to be cancelled because of forest fires and the pandemic. Cancelling another retreat seemed so unfair. Susan Gulick and the rest of her CfR staff had a meeting on how to save this retreat. Suzanne called and asked me if fly tying was an option. I told her that our club had tying vises and I would ask if we could use them. A big thanks to Doug MacKay for driving back home from the casting pond to get them for me.

One of the fly shops made up tying kits for Woolly Buzzer flies for the ladies to tie. There were 14 CfR participants and each had a river helper to help them learn to fly cast on Indian Creek Lodge's lawn. While one group of ladies was casting, the other group was learning to tie flies. We were fortunate that some of the river helpers had tying experience because they helped facilitate the CfR partners tying the pattern. Anyone who has ever taught fly tying knows it is hard to teach with more than a couple of people at a time. These river helpers really saved the day.



CfR participants & volunteers, Indian Creek Lodge, 2023.

This year Penelope Gadd-Coster (RRFF President), Leafa Fiore and Michael Tibbet, also RRFF members were river helpers. Leafa has been a river helper many times over the years. I want to thank each one of them for helping this year and doing their part to make this retreat a success. I know all the CfR participants had fun because of all the excitement and storytelling that took place in the lunchroom. I also want to thank the RRFF Board and RRFF members past and present for helping over the years with donations of all types to CfR. At the April RRFF General Meeting, I thanked all the members who were present that have helped over the years. One person that was missing was Chuck Perry. I would like to thank Chuck for his many years of tying flies for the ladies. I would also like to thank Tim from Outdoor Pro Shop for donating two fly rods for the lady's luncheon raffle. Outdoor Pro Shop has been a huge supporter of CfR for many years. Thanks again Tim!

Suzanne Gulick will be stepping down as Northern California's CfR Director this year as she will be moving back East. She has done a tremendous job over the years, and she will be missed. Next year there are two retreats in the planning stages. I will be getting the new contact information soon. Thank you again to all of you that helped make Casting for Recovery successful over the years.

Women's Fly-Fishers' Program

By Catherine Miller & Lisa Pardini

Our first fly-casting clinic was very encouraging with 13 women in attendance. The instruction was well received and appreciated by all. Go to the Russian River Fly Fishers website if you would like to see more information and photos from the clinic. Also, an

increased number of women are attending the on-going Thursday evening RRFF fly-casting clinics.

Our second women's fly-casting clinic is this coming Thursday, April 27. There will be a meet and greet from 4 - 4:30 pm during which time we will begin our discussion about fly-fishing day trips. Instruction for all levels will be from 4:30 - 7 pm.

You may want to become familiar with the Russian River Fly Fishers website which includes the monthly newsletter, The Cast. These publications are extremely comprehensive and informative about the Russian River Fly Fishers Club.

[Click here](#) to reach our club's website. Then you can either click on the front-page photo of our newsletter to review the articles, information, and photos for that month. Or you can [click here](#) to view that month's calendar for upcoming RRFF outings and information including the Women's Fly-Fishers' Casting Clinic dates. Also, [click here](#) to view written information about the latest Women's Fly-Fisher's Casting Clinics similar to what you're reading in this article.

Another area of our website we'd like to point out. [Click here](#) to view information about casting, fly tying, important knots to know, videos, and handouts. Also, there is a 10-part fly-casting instructional series by Joan Wulff, "The First Lady of Fly Fishing", a famous woman fly caster, fly fisher, and author.

We look forward to seeing you at the Women's Fly-Fishers' Casting Clinics. Catherine and Lisa

Important Announcement

Women's Fly-Fishers' Casting Clinic

Beginning in May we will be changing the Women's Fly-Fishers' Casting Clinic from the 4th Thursday of each month to the 3rd Saturday of each month from 1:00 - 3:00 pm. July will be an exception. The clinic will be held on the 4th Saturday because of the annual RRFF picnic will be held on the 3rd Saturday. On Saturday, May 20, our meet and greet will be from 1 - 1:30 PM and discuss our future day trips. Casting instruction will be held that day from 1:30 - 3:00 PM. The dates of the next three Saturday clinics are May 20, June 17, and July 22.

Save this Date!

July 15, 2023

RRFF Summer Picnic

\$55 per person

\$15 per child under 12-years-old

Bring your family and friends!

Santa Rosa's Galvin Park

"Under the Oak Trees"

[Click](#) & scroll down to official Summer Picnic Poster for more information: buy tickets, volunteer to help, donate raffle/silent auction items & more info.

Fly Fishing Isla Holbox, Mexico By Doug Mackay

Don Shaw and I, accompanied by our lovely brides, Sylvia, and Jan, traveled to Isla Holbox, Mexico to fish for baby tarpon. Holbox is off the northwest coast of the Yucatan Peninsula. We flew to Cancun, shuttled to Chiquilá and ferried to Holbox. It's a beautiful town with no paved streets, and no cars. The available modes of transport are feet, bicycles, dirt bikes and glorified golf carts.

We stayed in a four-star hotel that sported thatched roofs and a very open architecture that allowed iguanas and racoons to venture into the lobby. The food quality was excellent, and the menu never sat still. The narrow streets were clean and resplendent in native artwork. The obvious presence of capable looking security officers, both public and private, made us old-timers feel just fine. I brought back a visual image of a local young family of four, in beach clothes somehow riding a shiny new 50cc motorbike, wearing no shoes and four of the brightest smiles I've ever seen. We met with our guide on the evening before we fished. Edgar (aka) Rooster, born in Holbox and has 22 years' experience as a guide. He quickly approved of our tackle (8 and 9 wt. rods with tropical floating lines). Rooster told us to expect a one-hour boat ride to from the action. He spoke the truth. Don had tied plenty of the recommended flies and when Rooster opened Don's folder to select the first fly on the first fishing day, he choked as he said

"Barbless?". I think that catch count (a hero shot with the customer) goes a long way with the guides. I was told that there are only two rules. Don't panic and don't *trout-set* (pick up slack line). I proceeded to break all the rules.

On most days we fished open flats early in the day and moved to, and into the mangroves as the wind picked up. At the end of the first day, we were running home and Rooster stopped the boat and pointed to a school of Tripletales (Lobotes surinamensis). We scrambled to set up and Don caught one immediately. I tagged one on the second cast and the mood in our boat notched up.

Early on the second day, and on the edge of the mangrove jungle, Rooster told me to cast into a narrow and deeper channel. As usual, I didn't see the tarpon, but I assumed that he did. After a few strips I hooked up and didn't trout-set. Amazing power and acrobatics from a five-pound fish. Shortly thereafter, Don hooked a bigger one and played it virtually to the boat. We saw and cast to several more tarpon in the following days, but we didn't encounter as many as we expected. The rationale from our guide was that the water was colder than usual for this time of year. This was later corroborated by other fishermen and guides.



Rooster & Doug with his Tarpon.

So, the rookie caught a tarpon on a barbless fly. And I learned a lot about back casting in the mangroves, but I still must learn to not panic. I would certainly try it again.

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Calendar of Events

The RRFF Thursday Evening Fly Casting Clinics began on Thursday, March 16th, from 4:30 until 7:00 PM. Those days and hours will continue to be held every Thursday evening (weather permitting) until the end of Daylight Savings Time in November.

We are OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

Beginners are welcome...

We have many RRFF outings coming up during 2023. To view the signup sheets for those RRFF Fly-fishing outings click below.

[Click](#) here for a complete list of upcoming RRFF fly-fishing outings for 2023

How to Contact Board of Directors & Coordinators

If you want to contact one or more of the Board of Directors and/or Coordinators below, then click on this link, which will bring you to our website.

[Click here.](#)

The names of our Board of Directors and Coordinators will appear. You may click on a name and leave a message for any person below and our website will send it to their personal email address, and they will respond to your message.



RRFF Board of Directors

President: **Penelope Gadd-Coster**

Vice President & Outings Coordinator: **Ed Barich**

Secretary: **Brendan Galten**

Treasurer, Membership: **Spencer Bader**

Webmaster: **Mike Spurlock**

Casting Instruction Chairman, Facebook: **Steve Tubbs**

Casting Instruction: **Don Shaw**

Membership Badges & Pond Steward: **Doug Mackay**

Raffle Coordinator: **Gregg Wisley**

New Member Mentoring, Casting Instruction: **Jeff Cratty**

Steelhead in the Classroom: **Karl Joost**

Member at Large: **Tim Reuling**

Program Chair: **Mike Borba**

The Cast Newsletter Editor: **Dave Stone**

Member at Large: **Daniel Powers**

Coordinators

Fly Tying: **Lee Soares**

Casting Instruction: **Binky Castleberry**

Conservation Advisors: **Charlie Schneider & Tom Greer**

Women's Fly-Fishers' Program: **Catherine Miller & Lisa Pardini** — Co-Coordiators

Russian River Fly Fishers

c/o Spencer Bader
3310 Conifer Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95404



Russian River Fly Fishers Membership Application

I acknowledge in this agreement, and fully understand, that it is a release of liability. I further acknowledge that I am waiving any right that I may have to bring legal action or to assert a claim against Russian River Fly Fishers (RRFF) for its negligence. Any member who invites a non-member (including member's spouse and family) agrees that such guest is bound by the same conditions and agrees to so advise the guest. I have read this statement and agree to its terms as a condition of my membership in the Russian River Fly Fishers. This agreement is valid for all RRFF sanctioned events, (fishing outings, picnics, meetings).

*Indicates required field.

*Name _____ *Date _____ *How did you hear about us? Referred by? _____

*Address _____ *City/State/Zip _____

*Preferred Phone: Home _____ or Cell _____ *E-mail _____

Occupation _____ *Signature _____

*Circle a (Yes or No): I'm applying as a new member Yes / No or I'm renewing my existing membership: Yes / No

Single membership - \$50 annual dues Junior membership (live >75 miles from Santa Rosa or age 16-18 - \$25 annual dues.)

Gold membership - \$1,000 (one-time) Family Membership - \$55 annual dues—List family members: _____

The club would like to help you meet your needs. How many years have you been fly fishing? _____

Circle any areas you want help with: I would like help learning or improving my cast. I would like advice on fishing equipment.

I would like a lesson in tying knots I would like a lesson in tying flies I would like to have an experienced member mentor me

on local waters or on a club outing. Any other areas not mentioned above? _____

*How are you planning to pay? _____

Note: Dues paid by a new member joining the RRFF after March 1st of any year will cover the balance of that year and the membership dues for the following fiscal year. The RRFF fiscal year runs from July 1st to June 30th. IF YOU PREFER, YOU MAY JOIN OR RENEW ONLINE at www.rrflyfisher.org
OR NEW MEMBERS, MAY MAIL THIS APPLICATION TO:

RUSSIAN RIVER FLY FISHERS, C/O SPENCER BADER, 3310 CONIFER DRIVE, SANTA ROSA, CA 95404