

Wet Fly Fishing for Brown Trout in New Zealand

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Author of Trout Fishing and Sport in Maoriland," etc., etc.

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ON the whole, what should be aimed at in fly-dressing is to produce by general effect an imitation of the colours of flies that are to be found on the water at all seasons, and not to attempt slavish imitations of a great variety of flies. The colours already given are always represented on the water where water flies are to be seen. It is well to keep in mind that trout cannot be taken by any fly unless they are feeding. A north-east wind, although warm and generally moist and favourable to the birth of flies and insect life, is for some reason not yet explained, almost a bar to sport in Maoriland, at any rate by daylight, the fish hardly feeding by daylight while it lasts; while, during a rough cold south west wind, they are generally on the feed during the whole twenty-four hours. Perhaps for fly-fishing the most favourable condition is when, in warm summer weather, there is a light south west air or breeze. This in warm weather does not interfere much with the birth of flies. The fish rising freely generally all day. Most-ly when the wind has some west, there is a chance of sport, and when the wind has some east there is less chance of sport. When there is "thunder in the air," and before the storm has begun, trout seldom take, but after the storm has passed, except in a north-east wind, they often rise freely, and even do so sometimes when the storm is at its height. The question of rods is often discussed. My own preference for fly-fishing on streams that can be fished from bank to bank by wading is for ten-foot rods. Twelve ounces should be the outside weight for a ten-foot wood rod for this purpose. I am using an eight ounce wood rod and a six ounce Palakona cane rod, made for me by Hardy Bros., of Alhwick. The latter, except in a gale, is by far the most pleasant and effective rod of this length I have ever fished with, and should be still more suited to persons whose occupations are sedentary, or to women. These light rods will be appreciated towards the end of a day's fishing. They are not so apt to break the gut in striking too hard, and in playing fish are not so likely to tear away the hook from a slightly hooked fish as are heavier rods. With them should be used the best quality of No. 10 level silk line, taking Hardy Bros.' level line of that number as a guide for thickness. There is no need to have rods or reel lines heavy for fly fishing, as the gut used is of necessity light compared with

that used for minnow or similar fishing. Still, very fine gut, except for special purposes, is unsuitable, losing too much time in landing the fish, and, except in very experienced hands, is apt to be broken in striking. Owing to different dealers numbering their reel lines and gut differently, I give Hardy Bros.' gut figures also as a standard for size. In the same way I have taken Limerick books and numbers as a standard guide to size for my own books, which are numbered according to Limerick sizes.

A useful strength of gut for general use for lower six feet of gut cast is Hardy Bros.' "x and 1/2 drawn gut," and of natural gut "Regular" and "Padron 2nd." For the three feet between this and the reel line stouter gut may be used. As to the respective merits of natural and drawn gut, the latter frays more quickly, but requires less skill in making or mending level lines, as the strands of a size are drawn to one thickness, whereas, in natural gut, they require to be picked. With regard to the respective merits of tapered and level gut casts—the tapered cast rather better, but when broken require more skill and trouble in replacing the broken strands so as to maintain the taper, whereas, with level lines, if broken, and spare natural or drawn gut is carried, according to the material of the cast, the spare strands will fit in anywhere; also, pieces of level line of the same thickness can be joined together without any arranging. The gut should be tinted only of some natural tint, bluish or greenish, but decidedly not more than tinted. The natural colour is too white and shining, and shows too much in any state of the water. Tinted as advised, it hardly shows, even in clear, still water, and is mostly seen by the trout from below and against the sky. Reels for use with these rods should hold a minimum of fifty yards of reel line, because it is necessary to cut off the damaged lower part now and then, and so a line gets shorter by degrees. This length of line is generally sufficient for streams of the size and character already mentioned.

(To be continued.)

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