



The Vice



Newsletter of the Tasmanian Fly Tyers' Club Inc.

Volume 16, Issue 3 Spring/Christmas 2023

Inside: North to Alaska, Club Trips – lots of them ...

Cover Shot – Sir Malcolm Crosse in Alaska!

For payments to the club

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Committee	Wayne Bellette Dave Long Paul Markey Tim Urbanc
Vice Editor	Doug Miller

<http://tasmanianflytyersclub.org>

President's Report 2023

As the weather warms up and the insects start moving there is a nervous energy sweeping the club about the dry fly time of year. The Club has run many trips so far; to Lake Leake, Four Springs, Lake Fergus and the Farm Dams. Thanks to the trip leaders of Wayne Bellette, Tim Lewis and Ian Stokes, and Steve Butler and Andrew Blackwood.

As I type more than the usual suspects are at the Miena Field Week being led by the soon to be retired, Treasurer Andrew Blackwood. The Club also held and attended some non-fishing events. The Great Lake Tie-In had a late venue change due to the Voice Referendum and this involved many members as most of the organising committee come from the Club. We had some exceptional guest speakers at our general meetings including Jim Jones talking about Australian cane fly rods and Ron Thresher talking about Tasmanian Mayflies. Ron also signed copies of his new book. Thanks to Wayne for organising the speakers and to Steve Butler for IT assistance.

In consultation with the Club's building and planning team plans for the Sorell Shack upgrade have been narrowed down and confirmed with work getting underway in late February 2024. We will be appealing for volunteers close to the time and I encourage you to help as able.

Christmas Drinks replace the December general meeting. Come along on the 18th. It's a great opportunity to catch up, tell tall stories and plan summer fishing trips. The Miena Sharking Weekend is on 12-14 January. The Cane Day is in January and is a very popular day run by the Tasmanian Fly Fishers Club. Peter Raz is our coordinating person and this year it is raising money for Casting for Recovery, which funds Breast Cancer Support.

Wednesday evening fly casting education sessions are running during daylight savings. The Club has several highly trained and qualified Casting Instructors who are happy to help anybody with casting. There are more details available on a Facebook page called 'The Wind Knots Fly casting Group'. Wayne Bellette can be contacted to provide more details if needed.

A big thank you to all those Club Members who both run and help with these events as the club would not function without your hard work. A great example of this is that John Spencer has

agreed, reluctantly to both house and maintain the Club's Fly Rod Library. This started from a generous donation to the Club from Bryn Carmen who had 2 high-quality salt-water rods he no longer used. These are now available for responsible members to borrow for short periods of time. Thanks to Tony Dell for replacing a stripping guide on one of these rods that was a bit worse for wear. For any of you who knows how hard Bryn fishes that's no surprise at all! We now have a third club loan rod (from Delly). It's a Stalker Guide Series 10ft 7 weight 4 piece. The other two are salt water Sage TCX 9 ft 9 weight

On a personal note, I have recently retired and plan to dedicate more of my time to both fly tying and fishing. I'm planning a few weeks in New Zealand in mid-January so may be asking for some fishing advice!

Merry Christmas and Tight Lines.

Andrew 'The President' Reed

Editorial

The Spring/Christmas edition of The Vice is one of trip reports and nothing much else. The usual tips and tricks and other stuff will feature again in the future but there just wasn't space for it all. I have also decided not to include the Index to previous Vice articles. This will be available on the club website in the near future.

We have a couple of international stories this time as well as the usual local ones - Malcolm Crosse has a great piece about his Alaskan adventure and the Treasure Andrew Blackwood traveled all the way to Ayr in Scotland just to meet his hero Davie McPhail!

David Travalia has penned a whimsical piece about river fishing on the way to a work meeting and there are reports about Four Springs, Lake Fergus and the Bothwell Dams weekend. There really was a lot going on!

The weather is warming, the duns are hatching all over the place and the President has retired - the fishing is looking promising so get out and enjoy it!

DM



Steve at Spot On fishing tackle has kindly provided the Club with 4 vouchers to the value of **\$30** each for the coming season. Many thanks for this kind support, and continue to patronise Steve's shop. Vouchers can be picked up from the Editor at your leisure!

This time the vouchers go to... David Travalia, Malcolm Crosse and The Treasure!

Send your stories to 55dmiller@gmail.com



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North to Alaska

After being involved with Fly Fish Australia and the Commonwealth Fly Fishers for many years and fished in various parts of the world then add to this fly fishing for giant carp in the UK and for Himalayan Trout in Kashmir I thought all those adventures were behind me.

Dear wife Kaylene had other ideas as after traipsing behind me to fly fishing comps and venues for years I was convinced that it would be fair to cross of a bucket list dream of hers to travel the inside passage to Alaska.

Ok says I but a couple of days fishing would be good, done deal says mother so I sets about planning the trip which would include the two days fishing.

After a 15 hours' flight into Vancouver which was experiencing hot and dry conditions and then a short flight to Calgary Alberta also experiencing the same above average climate The fishing did not get off to a good start as I had a planned float boat trip down the famous Bow river dry fly fishing for Browns and Rainbows.

Ringing to check in with the out fitters I was told that Fish and Game had imposed restrictions on fishing the rivers due to the high water temperatures and to reduce any stress on the fish stocks.

Of course I was disappointed but also in complete agreement with the decision, the high water temperature issue is something the New Zealand Fish and Game are also grappling with and with the climate warming may soon be a fisheries management issue the IFS will have to consider. So it was down to my last planned fishing trip which was a planned day Salmon fishing from the town of Sitka in northern Alaska (this was one of the stop overs on the inside passage cruise). The day was advertised as a "Wilderness Fly Fishing Trip to Alaska".

Being a cruise arranged trip it was get of here, meet here and go there, so along with three other angling hopefuls all from Georgia in the states we were transported to a "Outfitting centre" where we were fitted with waders and boots given a small duffle bag containing lunch water and snacks.

Then a short bus trip to the boat transport we headed out from Sitka on a clear blue sky day and

into the wilds and spectacular arctic coastal scenery. Half an hour later we were at the mouth of the Kallian river after steaming through water with fish busting out of the water all the way. After disembarking from the boat the anglers were given a briefing about the way to fish the river and in particular the precautions to take regarding the bears in the area. As Cameron our head guide stood in front to us armed with a what looked like a .357 magnum pistol to be used for our protection against bears, his comments were if you see a bear do not panic and do not run away from him as the bear can travel at 35mph and you will not out run it. Yeah right I say to myself.



After getting sorted with a 9 foot 7 weight (Echo brand) with floating lines and gaudy streamer flies we were off upstream to fish for Pinkie Salmon, these fish were on their annual spawning migratory run and to say that the river was teeming with fish of up to 12 lbs and more would not be an exaggeration. Whilst the attached picture just not really show how densely they were packed together there were huge numbers of fish in the river.

So I roll out the first cast to get an idea of length and then on the second cast my first fish is on and away, what follows will be the pattern for the afternoon hook up strong downstream run fight it



out and then having a close by guide comes along and nets it for you.



obvious Humphrey was very fond of caviar as all that was being eaten was the roe of the salmon.



My guide was a young lady who knew the game well and whilst not sporting a shooter had a bear alarm system. The picture shows her with one of my fish.

So what followed were a number of the same species of salmon up to about 10lbs and it was just one after another.

As we worked our way upstream into the forest the guide pointed out the presence of close by bears whilst I did not come face to face with Bruno the ABC Play School song was running through my head "there a bear in there ". From the numerous dead fish on the river flats it was

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In the course of conversation, the guide said if I was lucky I may catch a "Dolly" Dolly says I and the guide goes onto say that in the river are a Trout / Char species known as a Dolly Varden found only in Alaska which were there feeding on the discharged Salmon eggs.

With that and a change of flies (a smaller red and silver beastie with a bead head I started fishing in the areas of the stream not where the salmon schools were held up. Soon had a wee "Dolly" and with time running out and a walk back down



through the bush to the boat ahead of us with one last cast I hooked and landed a reasonable



‘Dolly “whilst not a monster. At 82 any” Dolly will DO”

So there it was a ‘Wilderness Fly Fishing Trip in Alaska “in amazing blue sky weather in awesome forest and mountain scenery the like of which I doubt will ever see again.

Malcolm Crosse

A Morning with Davie McPhail

Doug and I have long been admirers of Davie McPhail and his YouTube channel. He just seems to tie well-proportioned flies with a minimum of fuss. Not all of them are suited to our fishing conditions (Scotland seems to have a much greater diversity of insect life) but we were very keen on a fly called a “Dynamite Harry” which looks perfect for dun feeders on our lakes and rivers. They do work! Chris Hilton caught a fish at Four Springs using this fly back in October. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVZiCTzhQaI>

You might recall that during the covid lock downs Davie was participating in our Zoom sessions and on one occasion was a guest fly tyer. We were thinking that the “Dynamite Harry” would work well if tied using possum dubbing and a possum tail.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pcMNTHjr72M>



“Hang on!” I’m going to Glasgow in June and that’s not far from Ayr!

A few emails later (thanks Steve Butler) and I had an invite to visit with a possibility of a day fishing on the river Doon. Tony Dell kindly offered an assortment of possum dubbing and I had a spare piece of possum tail. Some concerns were raised about taking fur through UK customs, but they only seemed interested in African pigs!



I managed to contact Davie in the UK and a day’s fishing on the river Doon was organised. Unfortunately, his brother-in-law passed away just days before and his car broke down, so my plans were thwarted! Davie lives in Ayr which is about 1 hour SW of Glasgow. Like much of Scotland, it is economically depressed, and a bit run down. It does, however, have two rivers running through it, The Doon and the Ayr. It’s also the birthplace of Robbie Burns. If you recall the tale of Tam O’ Shanter:

*When chapmen billies leave the street,
And drouthy neibors, neibors meet,
As market days are wearing late,
An’ folk begin to tak the gate;
While we sit bousing at the nappy,
And getting fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and styles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Where sits our sulky sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.
This truth fand honest Tam o’ Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter,
(Auld Ayr, wham ne’er a town surpasses
For honest men and bonie lasses.)
O Tam! had’st thou but been sae wise,
As ta’en thy ain wife Kate’s advice!
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;*

That frae November till October,
 Ae market-day thou was nae sober;
 That ilka melder, wi' the miller,
 Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
 That every naig was ca'd a shoe on,
 The smith and thee gat roaring fou on;
 That at the Lord's house, even on Sunday,
 Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
 She prophesied that late or soon,
 Thou would be found deep drown'd in Doon;
 Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk,
 By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.
 When chapmen billies leave the street,
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 That at the Lord's house, even on Sunday,
 Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
 She prophesied that late or soon,
 Thou would be found deep drown'd in **Doon**;
 Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk,
 By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

This is the same river Doon that Davie fishes once a week for the yearly cost of 300 pounds (aren't we lucky). Fittingly, a club member is mentioned in this tale of drunkenness and debauchery.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqn7f4EH6Ck&t=2s>

Having booked accommodation in Ayr, I decided it was still worth visiting to deliver the dubbing. Davie lives in a semi attached just outside Ayr. (Davie very kindly donated two books to the club, and they will be up at the Miena shack if anyone is interested.)



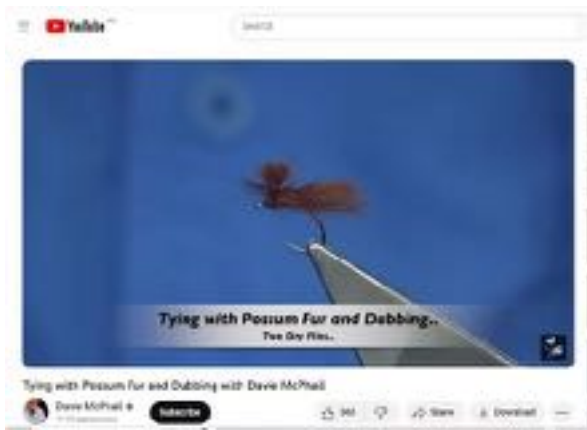
The Fly Fishers Entomology Chiswick 1839
The Dry Fly Fisherman's Entomology Mosely 1921

If you look online, you will discover that these books attract a reasonable price. Thanks also to the Edinburgh library!

Davie uses the books as a reference to the size and proportion of all the different insects whilst tying his flies. He also gave me a collection of his flies and packets of feathers and CDC. The flies are beautifully tied and noticeably, they are very lightly dubbed. Needless to say, I was dubious about getting them back through Australian customs, but I have discovered that declaring "dirty boots that have been in a rural setting" does rather distract the customs officials.

We spoke for quite some time about the decline of fishing in Scotland and the problems the salmon fishing industry is creating and the challenges the reintroduction of beavers has created. According to Davie, there are not enough trees for them to chew resulting in them stripping the riverbanks and causing erosion. Controlling sea lice is a big problem for the salmon industry and it is impacting on the wild fishery as well.

After my visit, Davie did experiment with the possum dubbing and gave a nice "call out" to both Tony Dell and me.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsOEXoUFhDU>

Naturally I gave Davie an invite to visit Tasmania and I assured him that there would be no end of members willing to host him and take him fishing. I'm sure there would be sufficient interest from Tasmanian and Australian fly tyers. He did mention that he was about to turn 60 and should start doing some trips before he gets too old!

I thought Andrew Hood's suggestion that he would make a good patron for the club was an excellent idea and that we should approach Davie some time prior to the next AGM. I would like to thank Davie for his hospitality, even though I was disappointed that the day of fishing did not work out.



Sprightly

Just a Perfect Day...



Photo by Tim Munro

Not all days on a river are perfect.... I had to get to Launceston by 2 for a couple of meetings. Work can get in the way of fishing. So I thought, if I get away at some reasonable time in the morning, I would have 2 maybe 3 hours on the Lake River, sort of on the way there. The weather forecast was a bit wet later in the day, so the window seemed to be getting smaller. As I set off, it was both calm and mild with a bit of cloud cover - could be good.

Well, by the time I stopped to get some lunch and more traffic than I expected and then, of course, the road works on the Midlands Highway time was shortening.

I arrived at the Lake River bridge about 11:30 to find a car already in the usual parking spot - bugger.

But, just as I was getting my euro rod set up, a guy with quite a smile on his face came back to his car. He had to get back to his place and was happy to report great conditions on the river - rising fish and he had done well with nymphs. A quick chat about tactics was beginning to eat into my ever shortening time.

I thought, get going as Gordon the land owner, who I had met on a previous trip, drives up. It would be far too rude to just say hello and head off onto his farm so a bit more chat..... clock ticking.

A quick guess about how long it was going to take to get to my meetings meant that my 2 hours fishing were beginning to look more like 1 and a bit...

I couldn't exactly remember where the good bits of the river were above the bridge. So I headed off as quickly as I could, wafting along with the scent of the flowering Hawthorn... lovely but a bit tough to get through,

After a couple of false starts I found quite a nice little run. Looked like there had to be a fish in there! First cast, good drift but not quite deep enough. next cast bit deeper and more on the edge of the bubble line - fish on nice fat little brown.

Moving up a bit, a couple more takes - how good is this??

Then an over enthusiastic strike = tippet caught in a low hanging branch, time moving on, tie on another 2.5mm copper pheasant tail nymph - good to go. I see a very nice run ahead, perfect seams and several rising fish, all on black spinners which seemed to have appeared all of sudden.

Quick look at my watch maybe 15 minutes fishing plus now a bit longer walk back to the car means do I stick with the nymph or put a dry on a dropper? By now I had 5 or 6 to hand so stick with the nymph and just be tempted by all the rises!

Time to head back to the car, make a mental map of where to start next time, take my rod down as I hurry back to the car, get my waders off, throw everything into the boot and then another chatty fly fisher pulls up. Very friendly and knows the river well, I tell him that there 3 or 4 good fish rising in a seam just under the bridge. 'I'll have a go' he says.

Get going...just managed to get to my meeting, probably looking like I'd had a perfect hour on a river.

**David Travalia
21 Oct 2023**

Lake Fergus Trip...



Lake Fergus trip is always a highlight of the late spring fishing calendar. Organised by Tim Lewis we are fortunate to be able to gain access to this remarkable little lake thanks to the generosity of landowner Randall Trethewey.

The road in to the lake is around 10k and winds through some wonderful highland countryside. Wallabies, echidna and a surprising number of wombats scatter as you drive carefully along the track. Without this access it is a 3 hour walk!

The lake itself is quite shallow and the water is crystal clear so fish can be polaroided quite easily once you know what to look for. There is scope for shore fishing, wading and small boats but no petrol motors are allowed.



When I arrived on the Friday I was lucky enough to be met by Tim Lewis took me out in his Coolum boat which was ideal in this shallow lake. We saw an enormous number of fish and managed to land a few between us. (I might have

done better if I hadn't made to unwitting choice to spend an hour or so fishing with a straight hook!)

Club members gradually arrived with four of us braving the wilderness camping, albeit in campers and cars. Others traveled back to the comfort of shacks in the Miena area. It was a great evening and many world issues were resolved - I'm sure you have noticed...



Saturday was a different day with very strong winds making fishing difficult for the boat users. I circumnavigated the lake (around 7km) and managed one lovely fish in very shallow water near the reeds which monstered my beetle pattern - probably thinking it was a frog. The winds away from the sheltered bits was quite ferocious so I decided to just enjoy the walk and familiarise myself with the different parts of the lake.



There were a few fish caught early, particularly by Norm Cribben who managed 4 before most us had woken up!

The fish were not huge but were beautifully marked and very determined not to come to hand.

The weather report for the Sunday looked to be worse than Saturday so the hardy campers decided to abandon ship and return to their families and reap the rewards of coming back early. Some fish were caught on Sunday by members who had the luxury of residences in Miena benefited from a good nights sleep!

Many thanks to Tim Lewis for organising this trip and I would encourage all members to give it a go if we are lucky enough to get an invite next year!



DM

Cane Day on the Pine

Are you keen to get out your old or new cane rod and fish Little Pine for a Day in January?

Sunday 21st January 2024

The Fly Fishers' Club of Tasmania has been reviving an old tradition of fishing with cane rods on Little Pine. Last year we were supported with participants coming from around the state and mainland. Some individuals came along with no club affiliations, others from the Tasmanian Fly Tiers and our club, The Fly Fishers' Club of Tasmania.

On Sunday, January 21, 2024 we will host another day. The day will start at 10.00am and conclude at 4.30.

On the day please register at the Fly Fishers' Club shack, Noonamena at Little Pine by 9.30am

A BBQ will follow at the club shack with the presentation of a bottle of Whisky to the angler with the lucky participation number.

Dress up in your old tweeds and deer stalkers if you wish or your normal gear. Club members, friends of club members and anglers from other clubs and keen fly fishers are warmly welcome.

A charge of \$20.00 for entry will be made to help with catering and this year we will donate to **Women's Breast Cancer through Casting for Recovery.**

If interested or attending please contact: Chris Crawford at ccrawford@netspace.net.au or Secretary Richard Hawley, via email at secretary@flyfisherscluboftasmania.org.au. a week before event for catering purposes. We would love you to come along, compare cane rods and fish. Look forward to hearing from you.





Bothwell Farms Tench Weekend

The Bothwell farm dams trip this year was well attended but this year it was steeped in unexpected controversy!

As usual there were two separate groups, one camping at one of the lakes in tents and vans focused around an open fire and one in the comparative luxury of the shearer's quarters with comfy chairs, cooking facilities and electric lights.

Both camps were lucky enough to be supplied with some fresh brilliantly butchered venison courtesy of beloved member Nick Ingles. This was much appreciated so thanks Nick.

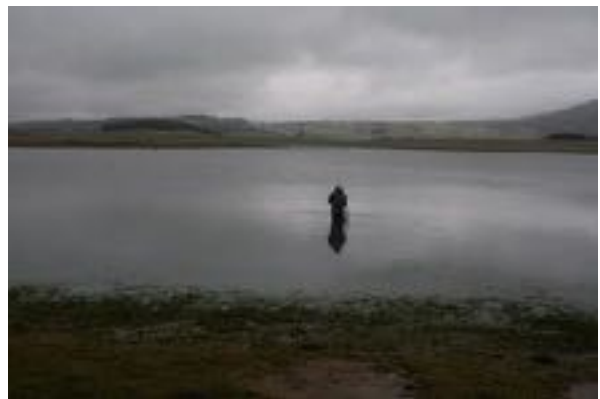


The campers were in fine form and were enjoying themselves around the campfire on the Friday night. Fish had been caught, venison cooked to perfection over charcoal by Steve Butler and Craig Granquist. Conviviality was abundant when, without warning, but obvious preplanning, a presentation was made to the Treasure.

Club member known by many just as 'Aspro' appeared by the gazebo (another example of brilliant planning by Steve and Craig) and awarded the Treasure with a medal for his effort in *The Vice Spring/ Christmas 2023*



catching a Tench (and storing it thoughtfully in the Butler tent) at the previous camping event last season. A suitably humble acceptance speech was made and the obvious pride of the recipient was enjoyed by all. So far all was above board and people retired to their various forms of accommodation in the hope of early morning midge



fishing.

Some hardy folk headed off very early (4.30am!!) whilst others decided that a less extreme



beginning to the day was warranted. Some good fish were caught and all seemed to be going well - and this is where the controversy began.

Photo by Norm Cribben

'Aspro' the instigator of the Tench King medal proceeded to catch himself a Tench in the aptly named Mosquito Bay thus relieving the treasure of the very medal he had won the night before. Saddened and bewildered he was gracious in relinquishing his medal in what surely must be one of the briefest of all reigns!



With full stomachs those of us who were camping traveled back leaving the luxury seekers to their own devices.

Many thanks to Stephen Butler, Craig Granquist and their team who set up the camping side of things complete with gazebo, fire pit, fire wood and a portaloos! Thanks also to Ian Stokes and his team who organised the Shearer's quarters. It was another great club event - although tinged with unexpected controversy!



DM`

The Saturday night gave members to opportunity to attend a long table meal in the Shearer's Quarters and this event went off with none of the controversy of the previous night. More venison was eagerly devoured (thanks Nick) and many tales of fishing exploits were aired.



Four Springs 2023



Early in October there was a chance to travel to Four Springs mid-week to give people a chance to experience some of the first dry fly fishing of the season. Treasure Blackwood coordinated the event and booked salubrious accommodation at the the Hadspen Caravan Park which is about 30 minutes away from this wonderful lake (no matter which way you travel there!)

The lake itself is virtually at sea level and is well protected from some winds - and also vulnerable to some very cold southerlies at some times! It is a well stocked fishery which stays pretty much at a consistent level allowing for prolific weed growth and also a fantastic nymph breeding area. It is a great venue for shore and boat fishing and is generally a relatively shallow lake with some deeper areas. The fish, both rainbows and browns, were on the chew and there were some truly magnificent specimens amongst them.



At this time of the year it seemed that the duns really only started to emerge at about 2pm with occasional chancers coming up earlier. Once they start to rise though they came in serious numbers and the fish became willing.

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Club members were there in force and I think nearly everyone and their dog caught fish!



The fish were all in excellent condition and really didn't want to come into a net. Many were close to the magical 5lb mark. Methods for catching them were on dry fly and emergers, nymph in both static and slow retrieve - even plonking was successful!

It was great to see that Brian 'Macca' McCullagh finally got to fish after a lot of frustrating health events that seem to have followed him for quite a



while. He looked very happy with his efforts!

We went to the Carrick Pub for a meal on the first night and shared a barbecue on the second - both

of which were very pleasant indeed. Conversations went on well into the evening and many tales both tall and true were shared as is



DM

the norm on a trip like this.

Many thanks to Andrew Blackwood for organising the event and to all the people who contributed to making it a success once again. Four Springs is a great place to fish in the early season in particular but also it is well worth a look at any other time of the year. The fishing is never really easy but always rewarding and the chances of catching a beauty are pretty good!



<http://tasmanianflytyersclub.org>



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