

Book Review

Trout's larder. A guide to trout food in New Zealand streams

Duncan Gray & Jens Zollhoefer (2006)
Reed publishing (NZ) Ltd, Auckland,
New Zealand. 145 pp. ISBN 0-7900-
1068-2, \$NZ 24.99.

As a fly fisher and fishery scientist, one of the intriguing aspects of fly-fishing to me is what I call the “scaling factor”. By this I mean that fly fishing can be scaled to the size of the water, but also to varying levels of knowledge. Regarding the size of the water, many anglers who generally fish large boisterous rivers, can have equal satisfaction by scaling down their gear and fishing small streams. Regarding knowledge, there will be many successful fly fishers who have a very rudimentary knowledge of entomology, but stick with tried and true patterns of flies fished under particular conditions, and catch good numbers of trout. However, for anglers more interested in what goes on under the water surface, there is the opportunity to acquire knowledge on river types and flow patterns, trout behaviour, and of course the animals that comprise trout diet.

In 1993, Norman Marsh published his classic *Trout Stream Insects of New Zealand. How to Imitate and Use Them*. This was the first serious attempt to unravel some of the mysteries of aquatic insects to New Zealand anglers, and how they might be imitated by various fly patterns. While this book will remain a “must” for serious anglers, a lot of new knowledge has been

obtained in the intervening two decades. The present book is a welcome addition for the New Zealand angler who wants to understand more about the identity and lifestyle of aquatic and the main terrestrial insects that trout feed on. What fly fisher hasn't wondered about what triggers a synchronous emergence of mayflies? what do the adults of particular nymphs look like? are the more common nymphs so widely distributed that the same fly patterns will be successful anywhere in New Zealand? and so on. This small book provides many of the answers to such questions. While it is small in terms of its size (19 cm x 12 cm, and made for pocket and hence field use), it is not small in terms of its content.

The book is very readable, with a clear and consistent narrative; scientific anecdotes on life history information are used liberally and effectively. The photographs are of a very high standard, especially considering that many of the subjects are about a centimeter long. The two illustrated keys to aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates are similarly of a high standard.

My criticisms are minor. There are a few inconsistencies with the use of italics; the authors' claim that there is no published proof of brown trout migrations downstream after spawning is incorrect, but to be fair the proof is in commercial reports and not readily accessible to the public; while it is true that common bullies have a “preference for quiet, often shallow waters”, this does not apply to bluegill bullies that are found in fast moving water; convention with

fish illustrations is that the head be to the left and not to the right as in many of the photographs; a scale on each photograph would have been helpful. I was somewhat surprised to find the concept of super normal releasers being discussed in relation to most of the prey animals, given that this is only a theory and does not appear to be widely accepted in angling literature beyond New Zealand. I would rather those sections have been replaced with a list of standard fly patterns that best imitate

the organisms being discussed.

Overall, this book fills a niche for New Zealand anglers (mainly fly fishers but not exclusively), and will be a very welcome and readable addition to anglers fishing vests as well as their libraries.

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