

established 1932

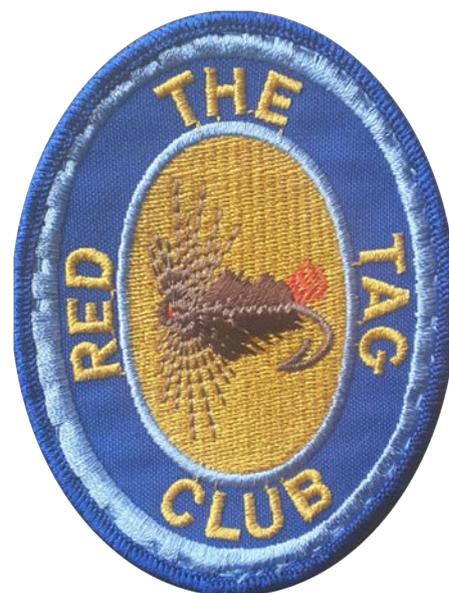
# tight lines

Newsletter of the Red Tag Fly Fishers' Club  
June 2019

# 2019 Red Tag

## Committee:

- President: Tony Ryan
- Vice Presidents: Vin McCaughey & Barney Stephens
- Secretary: Bill Jackson
- Treasurer: Don Amour
- New Member Coordinator: Ross Caton
- Trip Coordinator: Peter Coles
- Newsletter: David Honeybone
- Leff Andropof
- Craig Bolch
- Janie Joseph
- Dan Mamrot



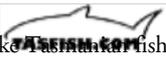
## News

### Editorial:

It's getting colder and time to swap into the heavy waders, or layer up. Let the streams be and head for the lakes. Also a good time to start attending to some off-water events, such as fly-tying, fly-casting or the activity/ information meetings. Also keep in mind the annual red tag dinner approaches, and this year we even have the facilities to enjoy the meal at our clubrooms!

One another note, take a look at Peter Coles' youtube channel, an excellent vlog.

*Thanks yet again to our club sponsors.*

<p>AFN Fishing &amp; Outdoors 20/52 Corporate Boulevard Bayswater Vic. t: 9729 8788</p>	<p><b>Aussie Angler Fishing &amp; Tackle Gear</b></p>  <p>Rick Dobson 30 Sherbourne Rd. Greensborough</p>	<p>Gin Clear Media fly fishing DVD's and films www.gin-clear.com</p>
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# Report

## Fishing Trip

*Dan & Jarrod Mamrot*

This trip was conceived by my brother Jared. He noticed that, between the two of us, we almost always catch trout when we go away trout fishing. Inspired by Hemingway, we decided that we were two excellent fishermen and we could easily live off the land like in 'Big Two-Hearted River' (1925). A plan was hatched for a fly-fishing trip to the mighty Mitta Mitta river eating only the fresh trout we would undoubtedly catch.

**Preparations:** The trip started out as well as we could have hoped. The weather prediction was for one of the largest storms we had ever seen, followed by two cold, miserable days of rain showers - perfect fishing weather! Pelting rain and sleet, crashing thunder and lightning strikes did little to dampen our enthusiasm as *we had a plan!* We soon realised *the plan* would be somewhat susceptible to a catastrophic weather event, but instead of cancelling we decided to ditch the backpacking aspect of *the plan* and continue with a car-camping expedition. We also had the brilliant foresight to supplement 'no food' with 'a cup of rice a day', "*just in case*".

**First Morning:** The drive to Mitta Mitta was very exciting! Besides the lightning, thunder, and "hardest rain I've ever driven through" (Dan) there were several large boulders washed onto the road from a small landslide. This really sharpened our vigilance and observation skills and heightened our senses for the scavenging challenges of the trip ahead. Just over 7 hours later, we arrived at our destination: the upper Mitta River.



We arrived in the dark (9pm) and were greeted with a plague of Bogong moths. You really haven't lived until you've spent an hour in the rain setting up your older brothers awkwardly large 10-man tent whilst fist sized moths bombard you and try to enter your mouth every time you speak/swear. Despite these relatively minor challenges we were in high spirits: *the trip had begun!*



We awoke to see the river had risen an extra 2.5 feet and was a deep brown colour, with the consistency of chocolate milk. It looked like the fishing was going to be challenging but at least the rain had eased somewhat: spirits were still high. We decided to persevere (*we needed food*) and headed downstream a few kilometres to fish back up to camp. Despite our efforts (*"I've euro-nymphed my effin' arm off!"*) no fish were caught and we decided to skip lunch, as well as breakfast (*"I'm not even hungry! Are you hungry? I'm not!!! Not even a little bit!!!!"* <- the power of positive thinking).

We made a move to Middle creek, struggled there for a few hours and ended up at the junction of the two rivers, staring into the immense pool in a state of despair (and hunger). Sinking lines were sent deep into the pool with large, heavy streamers launched again and again only producing a single follow but no take! The site of that single trout escorting my zonker streamer out of its territory haunts me to this day. I could see him! I could almost TASTE him! (Jared: "Well, it could be worse..." Dan: "How?!?!"). We had rice for dinner and cursed the land for our misfortune. Spirits were low.

**The Next Day:** The River had dropped ~2 feet and had begun to clear and we headed off to procure breakfast. At this point in the trip it became necessary to discuss a rule that we previously decided upon: "Let's release the first fish we catch!". Jared was firmly against the rule, not caring much about 'luck' like the Māori and others who traditionally follow this practice, but he ultimately agreed in the hope the first fish he caught would be undersize. Luckily the improved clarity of the river meant the fish were actively feeding once again and spirits were rising.

The first fish was more than willing to take a size 16 Emerald Perdigon and the beautifully marked 2lb brown was happily released. Confident again in my fishing abilities I decided to release all fish until I got closer to camp (avoiding the problem of carrying them for kilometres). After landing another 5 trout of quite good size, I looked up and realised I was 100m away from our campsite... "Bugger". I fished this 100m stretch with a ferocious intensity fuelled by hunger and anger at my earlier decision. A few casts in I felt contact with a fish and saw the faint peach coloured zonker strip I had been tracking disappear. "Success!". Landing the fish my triumph quickly dissipated as the fish was clearly under the size limit. I thanked and released the fish and returned to camp for another delicious meal of plain boiled rice (serves me right really).

Jared had not had success upstream and was delighted to hear my tale of catching and releasing fish. Cold, wet and furious, Jared went out again to fish the remaining hour of daylight and managed to land a couple of fish which tasted 'oh so sweet' compared to our bland diet of the past few days. Spirits were at an all-time high and we declared the trip "a massive success" based on the few fish that we caught. We packed up and left early the next morning with a warm feeling of satisfaction and a warm feeling of warmth from the heater in the car.

**Overall:** The experience taught us many things including, but not limited to, the thought that we usually over-cater for our outdoor expeditions and that you get surprisingly cold when you don't have enough energy to generate body heat. A future expedition is now being planned for the Victorian High Country. "Lean 'N' Mean 2019: The Second Course" will hopefully be even more successful, and all members are welcome (encouraged) to join us.



# Report

## Fishing Trip – Millbrook Lakes

*David Honeybone*

**It was so good; it warrants a follow-up.**

As a coda to last month's club trip here are a few more items that didn't make it first time round.

**Good polaroids:** I've been avoiding investing in these for some time making do with a relatively cheap pair. But struggling with sighting the strike indicator due to wind-ruffled water and the different shadows on the lake Scott plonked his pair of Spotters over my eyes and...I saw everything...the future...even Barney's underwear. The indicator stood out as the glare was minimised and it was just a thoroughly pleasant experience. So, when you can afford it take the plunge and invest in a good set.

**Fly box:** my flies are in back-to-front...slide in backwards, bend first, not point first. I wasn't the only one (*you know who you are...*).

**Don't leave fish to find fish.**

## Sunday report:

*Peter Coles:*

We went with Scott to Harbours, I landed four ranging from 2.5 to 4lb, on flash back pheasant tail nymph. In the evening Craig and I went to Gully. I got another three, last one in near dark on dry fly was 4lb, all rainbows. Midge hatch was intense for about 20 minutes right up to dark. Craig got a 1lb brown on dry right at the death. **Best fly: Red buzzer.**

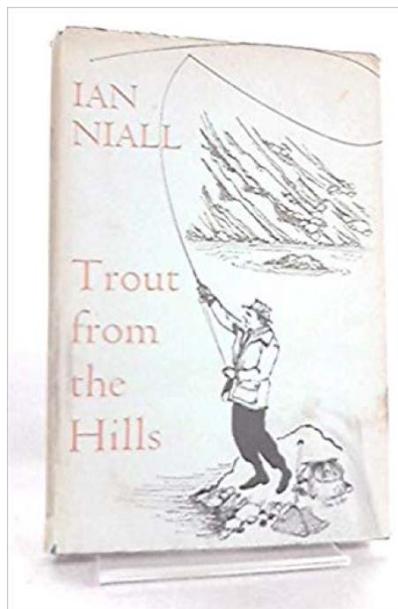


# Library Report

## Latest Acquisitions & Reviews

David Honeybone

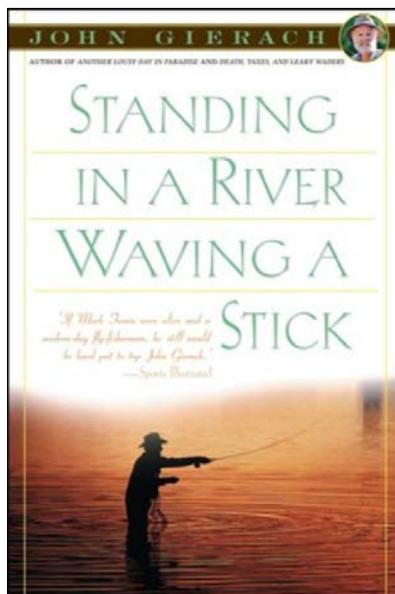
Trout from the Hills, Ian Niall, 1961



I read about this book in a broader article about the literary genre of fly fishing, so I looked it up. First editions are changing hands for \$200 plus (16 shillings on publication). Needless to say, this one didn't cost that much. It is a first edition and it still has its dust jacket, but it is an ex-library copy (cough) and has seen better days. But don't let that put you off as it is a beautiful book about the art of lake fishing and the high lakes of North Wales. Also includes lovely line drawings by Toni Goffe.

*"I've yet to find a fishing book with more lyrically poetic, beautiful prose than Trout from The Hills. Niall's book is about fly-fishing lakes, with a focus on the high country ponds of Wales. It's a fascinating combination of stories and instruction, and Niall's tips are as valid now as they were when he wrote the book in 1961."* (Spencer Durrant, Fly fishing books everyone should read, hatchmag.com)

### Standing in a river waving a stick, Even brook trout get the blues, John Gierach.



"Brilliant, witty, perceptive essays about fly-fishing, the natural world, and life in general by the acknowledged master of fishing writers.

With his inimitable combination of wit and wisdom, John Gierach once again celebrates the fly-fishing life in Standing in a River Waving a Stick and notes its benefits as a sport, philosophical pursuit, even therapy: "The solution to any problem—work, love, money, whatever—is to go fishing, and the worse the problem, the longer the trip should be." After all, fly-fishing does teach important life lessons, says Gierach—about solitude, patience, perspective, humor, and the sublime coffee break.

Recounting both memorable fishing spots and memorable fish, Gierach discusses what makes a good fly pattern, the ethics of writing about undiscovered trout waters, the dread of getting skunked, and the camaraderie of fellow fishermen who can end almost any conversation with "Well, it's sort of like fishing, isn't it?" Reflecting on a lifetime of lessons learned at the end of a fly rod, Gierach concludes, "The one inscription you don't want carved on your tombstone is 'The Poor Son of a Bitch Didn't Fish Enough.'" Fortunately for Gierach fans, this is not likely to happen." (<https://www.simonandschuster.com>)

# News

## Fly Casting

One key element of successful fly fishing is a good accurate cast. While much has been made in this newsletter about the fly tying, it's time to shine a spot light in the direction of casting.

Speaking from personal experience, being new to fly fishing and attending a casting session at the club pools was a daunting and somewhat intimidating experience. The members who impart their time, knowledge and skills however are patient and happy to share. At the moment, casting practice happens typically on a Saturday morning at the Alphington pools at Fairlea park drive. Being a public park, the pools are available during the day, excluding casting competition times, and that's where this story leads.

As you may have seen on the calendar app., The Red Tag casting pool is host to a number of inter club competitions. to give members the opportunity to take their casting skills to another level, and yes while this too may seem unapproachable, fear not, individual skill sets are all graded, so like a round of golf, you are essentially competing against your own score levels.

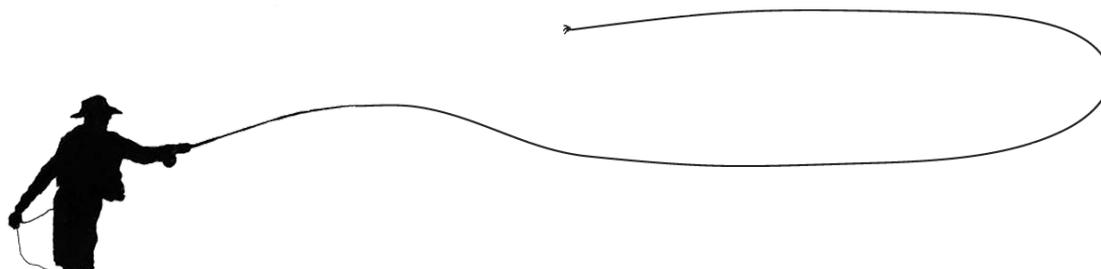
Red Tag Club does well in many of the competitions, so a shout out of congratulations to Leff Andropof and Geoff Newman for carrying the banner.

The club however needs new recruits to continue the good efforts of these folks, so have a chat with Leff on one of the Tuesday night meetings for me details, as there are some interesting possible developments coming through that will improve you casting craft the next time you're out in the wilds.

### Results:

In the *Herb Jenkins Memorial Team Event*, Red Tag finished in second place behind Sunshine Fly Fishers. Better results in the Red Tag Open Comp.

RED TAG OPEN		SUNDAY 19 MAY 2019	Dry Fly Accuracy	ACA SKISH	ICF Skish	Wet Fly Accuracy	2019 COC
RED TAG	1	L ANDROPOF	48	95	99	40	282
GEELONG	2	R HEATH	46	89	96	44	275
BALLARAT	3	M CUTHBERT	47	89	95	43	274
SUNSHINE	4	K LUCAS	45	91	90	36	262
SUNSHINE	5	B COCKS	42	89	89	38	258
SUNSHINE	6	T PHELAN	43	89	84	36	252
SUNSHINE	7	H HODGE	39	72	75	35	221
RED TAG	8	G NEWMAN	48	60	75	37	220



# News

## Membership Fees

*It's that time of the year again.*

Members have been issued an invoice which was sent by email or post and details of “*How to Pay*” are included. A member will be deemed **un-financial** if their annual subscription is not paid by the 6th August (Annual General Meeting).

### Annual Subscription Fees

- Metro \$85
- Country \$43
- Interstate \$43
- Pensioner \$43
- Junior \$21
- Family \$100

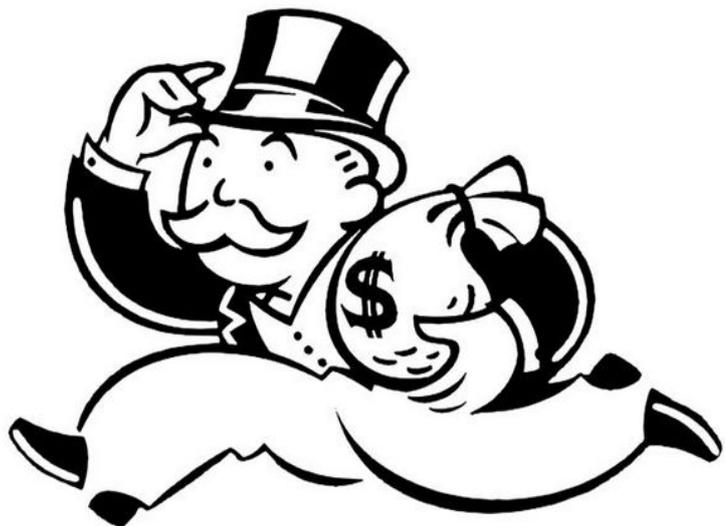
### Payment

Members can make an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to the Bendigo Bank account:

- BSB: 633 000
- Account Number: 130265432
- Message/Reference/Description: YOUR SURNAME

**Note** If paying by EFT please identify yourself with your surname in the reference box and inform Bill Jackson that you have made the payment.

- Email:  
billjackson@bigpond.com
- Phone: 0414 254 229 (There is a message bank on this line)



Bill Jackson, chasing down members for subs.  
Enjoy your Holiday in Vietnam Bill! (*not related news*).

# Fly Tying

## Intermediate & Advanced

*2nd Tuesday of the month.*

*\$2 Material Fee*

*The original zonker pattern was tied by the American fly tyer Dan Byford in the 1970s and was quickly recognized the world over, as a big fish fly and extremely easy to tie, yet a realistic imitation for most smaller bait fish. The original pattern used a lead or tin sheet that was folded and glued over the hook shank and then cut to shape to make the underbody. The flexibility of the Zonker as a bait fish imitation pattern is only limited to your own imagination. There are a huge amount of rabbit fur strip materials on the market in just about every colour imaginable, not to mention fox, squirrel, mink etc, the combination possibilities are endless. Another advantage with the zonker, unlike buck tail and feather wing streamers, is that it is an extremely robust pattern. If tied correctly the fly will normally outlive the hook, although the eyes are somewhat vulnerable to the small sharp teeth of trout. This can be improved by attaching the eyes with super glue and coating them with Bug Bond or head cement.*

*When fishing this pattern or any long tailed streamers in general for that matter. Many fly fishermen are of the thought, that when fishing a long tailed streamer the fish tend to “Nap” at the tail and won’t take the fly properly! This can be the case for smaller trout but generally speaking a large trout will take this pattern hard and fast. If you do experience napping at the tail when fishing, stop the retrieve dead, and let the fly sink a little for two or three seconds, nine times out of ten the attacking fish will pick it up on the drop.*

Source: [www.Thefeatherbender.com/tag/zonker](http://www.Thefeatherbender.com/tag/zonker)



# Fly Tying

## Beginning & Intermediate

4th Tuesday of each Month

\$2 Material Fee

### The Buzzer

When researching this one, there were a wide range of variations that constitute the buzzer pattern. That what is pictured below, could look nothing like what we end up tying on the night.

*A Buzzer is basically an imitation of the pupa of a midge or chironomid - in other words a non-biting "mosquito" in the state between a larva and the adult, flying insect.*

*Most people will already know midges in two forms: the red blood worm found in many lake sediments, which are the midge larvae, and the big swarms of "dancing" midges, which are the insects mating in mid-air in large numbers.*

*The midges are interesting to imitate for several reasons:*

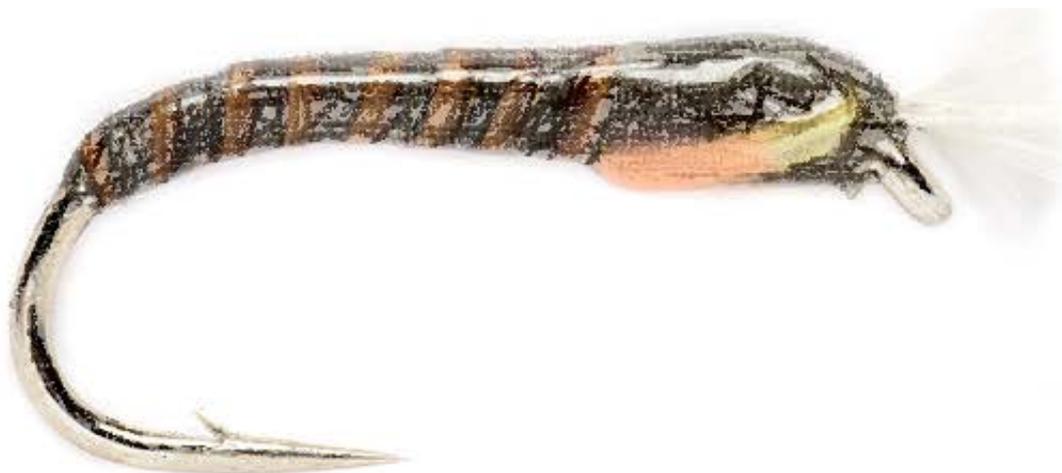
- *They are very abundant, particularly in still waters with hundreds of species.*
- *They hatch almost year round*
- *They are high on the menu for Stillwater trout*

*Because of this, buzzers are particularly interesting when fishing still waters, and most of the fishing methods developed for these patterns are specifically aimed at lake and pond fishing. One thing that characterizes the buzzer patterns is their sparseness.*

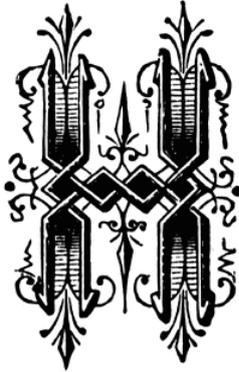
*The skinny patterns are motivated by several factors. The animals that they imitate are small and slender, and there is often a wish for a fly that moves and sinks freely in the water. Lack of body volume is one way of obtaining this. The primary way of fishing buzzers is by dead drifting. Since we are fishing in still water there is little water movement to help the fly. If the fly is retrieved, it is often done slowly, mainly with a figure-of-eight-retrieve.*

*Many buzzer fishing methods will hang the fly just below the surface, and movements in the line will make it rise slightly towards the surface as if the pupa was about to ascend and hatch. Flies are also fished sinking as shown below.*

Martin Joergensen [www.GlobalFlyFisher.com](http://www.GlobalFlyFisher.com) Search: Beginner's Buzzer



# Glossary



## An ongoing series of miscellany.

*David Honeybone*

### Hackle

A feather, usually from the neck area of a chicken, can be any colour (dyed or natural). Hackle quality, such as the stiffness of the individual fibres and amount of web, determines the type of fly tied with the hackle. Many hackles are grown specifically for fly tying.

### Hackle gauge

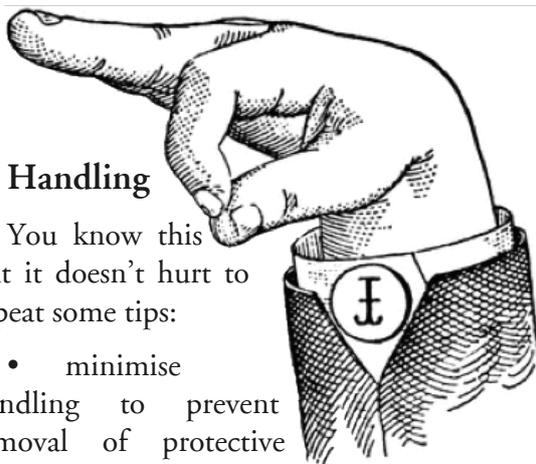
A ruler-like device to make sure the length of hackle used is appropriate for the size of hook. Particularly, hackle feather fibers (barbules) on a classic dry fly should be the same length as the hook gap.

### Hackle pliers

Fly-tyer's tool for wrapping the hackle feather around the hook.

### Hair stacker

Small tube which is used to level a bunch of hair, usually deer hair.



### Handling

You know this but it doesn't hurt to repeat some tips:

- minimise handling to prevent removal of protective slime
- use forceps to remove barbed hooks
- if the trout has swallowed a hook cut the line

- use a rubber or small mesh net and keep the fish in the water
- remove the hook from the fish while it's in the water
- handle the fish with wet hands, take a photo as quick as possible, hold the fish by the tail and belly to help minimize damage to it, and return the fish as quickly as possible
- don't let the fish go if it's too tired to swim away
- lower the trout's head in the water and move it back and forth to force water through its gills. Hold the fish by the tail until it shows signs of being able to swim away by itself.
- avoid releasing trout in fast moving water, the fish may appear to swim off but might not be strong enough to fight the current

### Hare's Ear

A nymph in sizes 12-16 can be used as both a mayfly and a caddis fly imitation and in larger sizes as a stonefly imitation. Impressionistic flies are usually most effective in medium to fast water, in streams with lesser populations of aquatic insects

### Hatch

A large number of flies of the same species

### Haul

A pull on the fly line with the non-casting hand to increase the line speed and get greater distance. This is done effectively during line pickup.

### Headwaters

The upstream section of the river before the main tributaries join it. This section is typically much smaller in width and flow than the main section of the river.

## Hen Hackle

Hackle feathers from a hen chicken characterized by soft, wide feathers.

## Herl Feathers



Used for tying with long individual barbules each having short dense fibers. Used as tails and to make fly bodies, usually from Peacock and Ostrich

## Hollow Hair

Hair from some animals is mostly hollow, thus holding air and making these hairs float. Ideal for tying dry flies and bass bugs. Antelope, deer, and elk all have hollow hair.



## Honeybone:

Synonymous with the 'Woolly Bugger' fly pattern. Known for creative spontaneous repairs with Gaffer Tape, capable of turning a 6ft 3wt stick into a nymphing rod with a 12' arm reach. Fauna and lately reptile magnet.

## Hook

The object upon which the fly is tied; can be any size from tiny to huge; made from steel wire, and either bronzed, cadmium coated, or stainless. Hook designs are variable; style used depends upon the type of fly being tied.



## Hook size

To a degree hooks are standardized based upon the gap (or gape) which is defined as the distance between the hook shank and the hook point.

## Howqua River

The headwaters of the Howqua River rise below Mount Howitt in the western slopes of the Victorian Alps and descends into the Goulburn River within Lake Eildon.

The character of Billy Slim in Nevil Shute's 1952 novel, *The Far Country*, was based on Fred Fry, a notable fly fisherman, who constructed several huts (Fry's hut, Upper Jamieson Hut, Ritchies Hut, Gardiners Hut and Noonans) along the Howqua.

Reasonable 2WD access to middle and lower stretches and 4WD access to upper reaches but large stretches are accessible only by foot. Very reliable in the upper stretches. Dries and nymphing (black nymphs in cloudy water) work well. Pan size trout mainly with occasional bigger fish. During very hot weather consider the cooler water above 8 Mile Creek. Frequented by tiger snakes in summer.

## References

- Weigall, P (2014) Fly fishing north east Victoria, T/A Flystream, Melbourne, Victoria.
- <http://www.hooked-on-flies.com/glossary.htm#H>
- [https://parkweb.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0/020/313805/Howqua-Hills-Historic-Area-Visitor-Guide.pdf](https://parkweb.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0/020/313805/Howqua-Hills-Historic-Area-Visitor-Guide.pdf)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Howqua\\_River#cite\\_note-HHHA-6](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Howqua_River#cite_note-HHHA-6)



*Possibly the only photo we need to publish.*



