



## Affordable Fly Fishing in New Zealand

*with Zane Mirfin*

New Zealand has burned brightly as an international fishing destination ever since American Zane Grey first put New Zealand on the world map back in 1926 with his epic book, *Tales of the Angler's Eldorado, New Zealand*. Ever since then, many California anglers have made the pilgrimage across the Pacific and reported glowingly of the clear pristine waters, large slabs of beautiful trout, and the warm hospitality of the New Zealand people themselves.

One magazine article many years ago described fly fishing in New Zealand as "like driving a Porsche - by the time you can afford it, your eyes and reflexes have gone." Well, that's not the true story anymore and it may well be that today fishing New Zealand is easier and cheaper than at any other time in history. Modern economic development has led to a thriving and vibrant country that relies on tourism as a major industry, and services, internet access and communications are all world class.



*Zane Mirfin 2015*

*continued on page 2*

### July 2015 JOINT MEETING at Sierra Pacific FlyFishers

Date: Tuesday, July, 14th (Our regular date)  
Wet Flies: 6:00 PM  
Dinner: 7:00 PM (Choice of Prime Rib or Broiled Salmon)  
Speaker: 8:00 PM  
Place: [Monterey at Encino, 16821 Burbank Blvd., Encino](#)  
Cost: \$32.00 per person for dinner or \$5 for non-dining guests  
Parking: Free (see map on page 15)

**IF YOU WANT THE DINNER OPTION, YOU MUST MAKE A RESERVATION. PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS [HERE](#)**

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## Affordable New Zealand

Information, accommodation, air travel, rental vehicles, cuisine, fly shops, and access have never been better and there is huge scope for do-it-yourselfers to enjoy a highly successful and affordable fishing trip to New Zealand. In fact, the options are pretty much endless and there's no longer any requirements for fly fishers to stay at expensive, all-inclusive fishing lodges **if** they don't want to. There are very reasonable small motels everywhere, good pubs and restaurants where food is delicious, plentiful and very reasonable. There are also many camping opportunities and grocery stores where you can stock up on any and all food items you might wish to have while "in the bush."

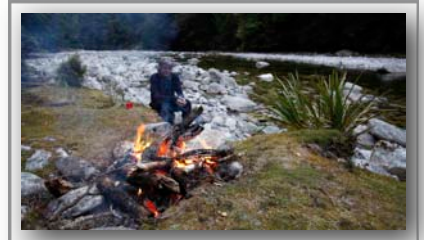
Our July guest speaker, Zane Mirfin, is an expert on the trout fisheries of New Zealand, especially the rivers and lakes of the northern half of the South Island. Zane will lead us through an image-rich tour of modern New Zealand and the fishing opportunities easily available without costing an arm and a leg. The last time Zane addressed the clubs introducing many of us to the great fly fishing in New Zealand was in 2008, complete with him in a leg cast and having to use crutches after a July mid-winter (in New Zealand) hunting trip and bad slip on ice. He's older and wiser now, and at 47, has been a professional fly fishing guide since November 1985 -- 30 years -- and has plenty of fishing tips and strategies to make you a more successful angler and not necessarily a "big spender." And, as his subject for this tour of SoCal fly fishing clubs is affordable fly fishing in NZ, he will show almost all he has learned about being a smart and budget-conscious fly fisher and Kiwi-land visitor.

Fly anglers from around the world have fished with Zane, and he has been in the fortunate position of having fished with or guided many of our previous club speakers, including Mike Lawson, Barry & Cathy Beck, David Lambroughton and Dave Whitlock, among others.

Since we last saw Zane he has been on many great new fly fishing adventures that he will show and describe to us. Innovation is in his blood, and at the low point of the Global Financial Crisis, as a self-employed operator, he feared that few people would travel to NZ and employ



*NZ Camping in Forest.*



*Campfire by River*



*Inexpensive Motels*



*Inside Inexpensive Motel*



*Hearty Pub Food*



*Pub & Restaurant.*

*continued from page 2*

## Affordable New Zealand

him, so he decided to run for political office and help bring about good policies to his area. The result has been two terms as an elected local government councillor for the Tasman District Council, making important decisions that affect both his community and the environment. As an accredited resource consent commissioner, Zane is well qualified to describe what has been happening within the New Zealand fishing and environmental scenes. And, by the way, he kept and still has a busy schedule guiding fly fishers from around the world; his fears of having a dearth of clients were unfounded

For those of you who haven't come across Zane before, you can check out his website [www.strikeadventure.com](http://www.strikeadventure.com)

Accompanied again by his capable wife Aimee (whom he calls the real brains behind his guiding business and a not-shy-or-hesitant but highly qualified driver on congested California freeways!), Zane and Aimee have taken the opportunity to escape the NZ winter and four children to soak up some Californian summer fun and spread the good word about fishing in their native land.

You'll find Zane and Aimee friendly and easy to get along with, so bring plenty of questions along for a fun night and they'll do their very best to give you all the answers you need to know about fishing in modern, and affordable, New Zealand.

### **Zane Mirfin Bio:**

Self Employed Fly Fishing Guide 1985-2015

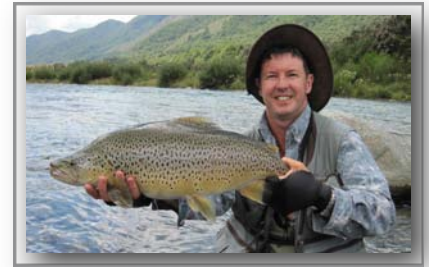
Member NZ Professional Fishing Guides Association (NZPFGA)

Senior photographer / Writer for **Fish & Game NZ** Magazine (audited readership +250,000 for Special Bi-Annual Editions also 4x commercial editions annually – largest circulation freshwater magazine in NZ). Won SPARC Award for Recreation / Adventure / Lifestyle Reporting 2004 at National Sports Journalism Awards.

Fairfax Newspapers – Nelson Mail Opinion Columnist – 'Wildside' Outdoor hunting & fishing column since July 2008 (usually ½ page column with photo)



*Mike Lawson Fishing with Zane*



*Zane with 11 lb Brown*



*Landing A Big NZ Trout*



*NZ Mountain Lake*



*Scenic*



*West Coast Stream. South Island*

*continued on page 4*

## Affordable New Zealand

Co-founder of political party ‘Outdoor Recreation New Zealand’ with father Stuart. The Outdoor Party won 1.3% of the vote in the 2002 general elections with Zane as media spokesperson.

Fished all over NZ, also internationally on Australian Great Barrier Reef, numerous USA States (including California, Montana, Idaho, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado), British Columbia for steelhead, Christmas Island for bonefish, Sweden for grayling and arctic char

Co-Author & Photographer:

**Brown Trout Heaven** – Fly Fishing New Zealand’s South Island 1999

**The Last Best Place** – Images of New Zealand Fly Fishing by Zane Mirfin 2008

Elected Tasman District Councillor (2010 -2013, 2013 – 2016)

University Education: BSc. MA.

Masters Research Thesis – Trout Fishing in Nelson: Management of a Recreational Resource.

### Recent New Qualifications

Maritime NZ Professional Skipper Qualifications LLO 2011

‘Making Good Decisions’ Resource Consent Commissioner Re-Certification 2014 - 2019

**Personal:** Zane and Aimee married for 15 years. Four children Jake 14, Izaak 13, Rosie 11, Charlotte 10. Live in Richmond, Nelson, New Zealand.



*Backcountry Rainbow*



*New Zealand*



*Mirfin Family in 2008*



*Mirfin Family in 2015*



## Board of Directors

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Southwest Council-FFF Representative	OPEN

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[Wildernessflyfishers@gmail.com](mailto:Wildernessflyfishers@gmail.com)

To join WFF, Visit our website  
[www.wildernessflyfishers.org](http://www.wildernessflyfishers.org)

## Monthly Board of Directors Meeting

The July 7th Board Meeting will be held at 400 Bonhill Road Los Angeles, Ca 90049. Meetings start promptly at 7:30 P.M. All members are welcome. New members are especially encouraged to attend. Come and see how your club runs and you might pick up some fishing tips, too.

## COMING EVENTS

For more information go to the WFF website [CALENDAR](#)

Weekend Wade	Sun.	July 12
Sun Canyon	Sun.- Sat.	July 12-18
Midweek Meander	Wed.	July 22

## Monthly Raffle Items

## Value

July 2015 Raffle Items Provided  
by Sierra Pacific Fly Fishers!

# Kelsey Bass Ranch Outing

*by Celia Carroll*

Into every angler's life some rain must fall, some wind must blow -- and some fish have lockjaw. Some, not all. There were a number of nice lunkers landed during April's Wilderness Fly Fishers' Kelsey outing, despite winds strong enough to make a float tuber weep. Fishing may not have been as good quantity-wise as in past years, but everyone agreed the fish caught were quality fish that fought long and hard. Olive or black wooly buggers and flash-a-buggers retrieved deep and slow were the most productive patterns.

As always, camping at Kelsey was great despite an impressive rainstorm the first night that made Larry and me glad of our snug, dry tent as we listened to the happy sound of rain pattering on the fly. Fortunately, the drought-parched ground was so dry it soaked up the rain immediately. The next morning you could barely tell it had rained at all!

The traditional Saturday evening potluck occurred without a hitch. Everyone thanked Doug Hall for superbly fulfilling the job of Master Chef on the barbeque grill and all seemed to appreciate my working as his assistant.

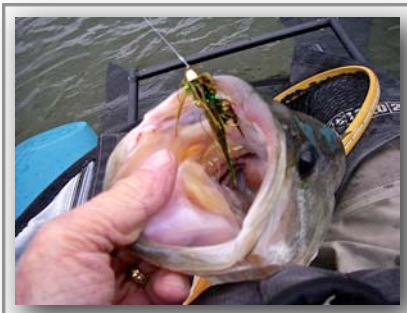
While the anglers battled the wind, I had a glorious time watching birds – bald eagles, red-breasted mergansers, and American avocets were standouts among the usual coterie of spring ducklings, nesting Canada geese, robins, common nighthawks, and tree swallows. Larry and I are both looking forward to another Kelsey outing next year with its unique combination of camping, bassing and birding.



*Clockwise from left: Rich Peters, Gerry Berman, Doug Hall, Celia Carroll, Clay Dodder, Larry Carroll, Julie Dodder, & Tom Small*



*Thanks to George Patterson for the accompanying photos.*



*Tom Small & George Patterson*



# Notices

It is with a heavy heart that we report that longtime WFF member George Patterson passed away June 21, Father's Day. George was surrounded by his family - all the Patterson children were present.

George's wife, Sandi, says the passing was gentle. His last battle was with Pulmonary Fibrosis, an auto immune disease. Those who suffer from this disease never recover, nor could they have any control over what was dealt them. It is a testament to George's character and willingness to always look at the bright side of life that he lived so long.

In spite of his struggles with health, George fished Kelsey Lake - and caught many fine bass - on this year's April outing.

A celebration of George's life is being planned for sometime in August. WFF will share details as soon as plans are finalized.

Sandi asks that we share this information widely - George had many, many friends.



*Dr. George Patterson*



# Notices



Something for everyone, all anglers and fly tiers.  
Classes available for beginners through advanced.  
The classes for beginners, the equipment will be provided.  
Many on-stream workshops available.  
Learn from the pros how to cast, tie and catch!



**EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO JOIN THE FUN!**

**Date:** October 16 - 18

**Location:** Bishop Tri-County Fairground

**Hours:** Friday and Saturday: 9-5 Sunday: 9-3

**Entrance fee:** \$15.00 for all three days, \$20.00 for families up to four members. Eastern Sierra residents get \$5.00 discounted admission.

**Online registration opens August 16**

For more information and registration for classes:  
[southwestcouncilfff.org](http://southwestcouncilfff.org) or Call 818/200/1499





# WFF Member Corner

## Fishing Reports, Photos, Items Of Interest

Here is a new section for those of you who wish to let the club know where and how well the fishing has been. Please get them to me by the 20th of each month for inclusion in the next months newsletter.

Clay Dodder

I am happy to report that Jeff Cantle successfully defended his Ph.D. on May 22nd and is now Dr. Jeff Cantle. We will be sorry to see him and his wife Alexandra leave the Southern California area for their new home in Bellingham, Washington. Jeff has accepted a teaching and research position at Western Washington University. Jeff is an enthusiastic fisherman, enjoying the surf, rivers, lakes and fishing from a kayak. We wish them good luck in this next chapter of their lives.



*Jeff Cantle with a nice Madison River Rainbow*



# CROWLEY LAKE

## California's Finest Inland Fishery

*by Rich Peters*

I may be out on a limb here, but I believe there is ample justification to regard Crowley Lake in the Eastern Sierra as the best inland fishery in California. My conclusion is based on many years of fishing Crowley from a float tube, pram or boat and on the combination of the number of fish caught, their size and most importantly, the quality of the fish population. Although I am referring mainly to Crowley's trout population, the lake also boasts a blue ribbon Sacramento perch fishery.

My son Michael and I spent a few days fishing Crowley at the beginning of June, and the results as shown in the accompanying pictures were outstanding. Ironically, although the prevailing drought has decimated many Sierra fisheries, it has actually improved the fishing at Crowley in terms of the size of the fish being caught this year. That is because there have been two extraordinarily warm winters in a row in the Sierra and instead of freezing over the lake has been ice-free for much of the 2013-14 and 2014-15 winters. As a consequence, chironomids (commonly known as midges), which represent the primary food source in Crowley, have been hatching all winter long and the trout population has been feeding non-stop. As a result, the 20+ inch fish that we landed weighed in at 3 to 4 pounds, most of the fish we caught were in the 16-19 inch range, and a few smaller fish were landed in the 14-15 inch range. Our results included bottom hugging browns and cutthroats, acrobatic rainbows and, to round out the Crowley grand slam, one nice sized perch. The larger specimens routinely had us well into our backing, so be prepared for that if you go up to Crowley.



*The Author - Rich Peters with a nice Brown.*



*Mike Peters with a nice fat Rainbow*

*continued on page 11*

## Crowley Lake

I've heard so many misconceptions about fishing Crowley that I would like to offer a few valuable pointers to anyone just getting started, and perhaps even experienced anglers might benefit from them. First, a disclaimer – I do not hold myself out as an expert at stillwater fishing in general or to Crowley in particular. However, from many years of fishing Crowley, I have learned a few “do’s” and “don’ts” that might shorten a learning curve. As a point of reference, the following suggestions will assume that you are fishing from a boat (the most effective means of fishing the lake), even though there are a number of good float tube opportunities and, at times, even a few shore fishing opportunities.



*Top row: Mingling, Albino Baron, Copper Tiger.*

*Bottom row: Punk Perch, Olive Manuka*

Clearly the most effective way to get started, as is true with just about any new fishery, is to hire a guide and this will also help resolve where to find fish and which hotspots are fishing well at the time. There are a number of good guide options, including WFF favorite Ernie Gulley, Crowley Lake Guide Service, Troutfitter and Sierra Drifters, to name just a few. Whether you hire a guide, go out in a private boat, or rent a boat at the marina, you should be fishing with a “double nymph rig” under an indicator, very similar to what you might use for nymphing a river. The “nymphs” in this context will be midge larva, pupae and emergers represented by such flies as Mercer’s Midgling, the Albino Baron, Copper Tiger or even a standard Zebra Midge. Forget about the adult midges; there is very little dry fly fishing in the Lake.

Properly rigging those bugs is critical to success, and this, in turn, is determined in large part by how deep the fish are holding at the time (more on that in a moment). Fluorocarbon tippet is essential, and 4X to the top fly and 5X to the dropper (bottom fly) seems about right most of the time. Add a single B or BB split shot to the leader about a foot above the top fly and you should be ready to fish.

Early in the season, the fish will typically be holding in 18-20 feet of water or more; later on, the fish may be available in as little as eight or nine feet of water. Your job, in either instance, is to present your bugs near the lake bottom. How near? That depends. Conventional wisdom holds that your bottom fly in the two-fly set-up should be within six inches to one foot above the lake bottom. To figure out the exact depth of your location at anchor, attach a weight such as a hemostat to the bottom fly and lower it overboard. When it stops, lift it up about a foot and that is the point where you want to place your indicator. When the fish are deep,

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## Crowley Lake

probably anything over 12 or 14 feet, you'll need to use a sliding indicator (available at the local fly shops in Mammoth or the Crowley Lake store), the technicalities of which are a bit beyond the scope of this article, but the guides and the fly shops can get you set up properly. I believe, and some others will surely disagree, that there is an exception to the near-the-bottom rule. When you see clouds of midges circling in the air, that is an indication that the hatch is in full progress, and when there is a strong hatch in progress, the fish begin focusing on midges ascending upward through the water column. Under those circumstances, it only makes sense to get your flies higher up in the water column, perhaps a foot or two, by readjusting your indicator. Trial and error applies to fishing Crowley as much as any other lake or river.

Now that you are properly rigged up with two nymphs, a split shot and indicator, you're ready to cast. Growing up and using conventional gear, in order to catch fish we were taught that you needed to make the longest possible cast away from shore or your boat, and this same tendency inevitably carries over to casting the double nymph rig on a large lake such as Crowley. However, I have learned from years of experience that a long cast on Crowley is not only unnecessary but largely counter-productive. Trying to cast an indicator, split shot and two nymphs 50 or 60 feet, often in windy conditions, will simply result in more tangles, more frustration and less time with your flies in the water. A lob cast or water load of 20 – 30 feet is sufficient most of the time, especially in deep water situations where the fish are 20 feet below the surface and continually cruising in search of food. There are of course exceptions – if you are anchored near a drop-off and the drop-off is 40 feet away, that's where you need the flies. Either be prepared to make the cast or re-anchor the boat closer to the target.

You often hear fly fishing on Crowley described by the novice angler as “heave it and leave it” which means you cast the rig out and just let it sit there until a fish takes down your indicator. A better adage might be “heave it and leave it, don't you believe it.” Experienced Crowley anglers know that a far more effective method is to allow your nymphs to sink to their maximum depth after the cast, indeed allow them to be stationary for a short time, but then impart upward and downward movement which simulates the emergence of the real insect. (Midges don't ascend at a constant rate, rather they begin their ascent, then sink down a bit and then rise some more until they finally reach the surface.) You can accomplish a similar motion by intermittently stripping line in slowly, then pausing, or mending your line from time to time



*Mike Peters with another nice Rainbow*

## Crowley Lake

which has the same effect. Be ready at all times to set the hook when the indicator moves either straight down or just a twitch. The hook set needs to be fairly hard, remember you need to move 20 or 30 feet of fly line, plus the length of the leader before the flies will move even the slightest. When all hell breaks loose because you have hooked into a very angry rainbow, brown or cutthroat, allow the fish to run in order to protect your 5X tippet, but maintain moderate drag pressure to tire the fish before using your long handled net to end the battle. After putting on a display of acrobatics or combing the depths, these fish certainly deserve as long as it takes to resuscitate them prior to release.

In closing, I want to share a word or two about fishing Crowley in the fall when things get even more interesting and the weather is beautiful. The midge hatches continue throughout the entire season and midge fishing can still be productive, but now you have the added attraction of perch fry on which the trout are feeding. Moreover, in most years the fish will be concentrated in relatively shallow water in the North Arm around Green Banks and North Landing Bay which will be clearly identifiable by the flotilla of float tubes and pontoon boats on the water in those areas. This may be one time of year where I find it as much fun, and arguably just as effective, to strip small perch imitation streamers such as the Punk Perch, Matuka, Loeberg or Hornberg from a float tube as fishing midges from a boat. In this situation, the water is not deep so use an intermediate line or a Type III sink tip. Be forewarned, however, that these will be big, brawny fish and the strike against a taught line stripping in a streamer will regularly break a 4X tippet. Here, unlike midge fishing, the fish are not particularly leader shy. Consider using at least 3X tippet and be prepared to set the hook and immediately allow the fish to run.

If you haven't tried fly fishing Crowley you are missing one of the best stillwater fisheries and fun fishing opportunities anywhere. My best advice is don't listen to anyone who says it's like fishing worms under a bobber; try it for yourself or with a guide. After you've tied into three or four pounds of bruising rainbow, brown or cutthroat trout repeatedly throughout the course of a day on the lake, you might end up asking yourself why you waited so long, or haven't done this more often.



*Mike Peters with a nice Cutthroat.  
Cutthroat trout over 20" are being caught this year*

## Crowley Lake

*Editors note: While preparing this newsletter on Sunday 6/28, I received a text from Ernie Gulley. He reported his clients bringing 60 fish to the boat that day. I am guessing that Crowley is fishing just as well as Rich says, and with the drought conditions, may be the best fishing destination in California into the late summer and early fall.*



*The views from Crowley Lake are an added bonus*



# Print & Mail Coupons

If you prefer not to use our website, mail in a coupon with your check.



## Wilderness Fly Fishers Membership Application

\_\_\_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Dues: Starting January 1, 2015

### New prices

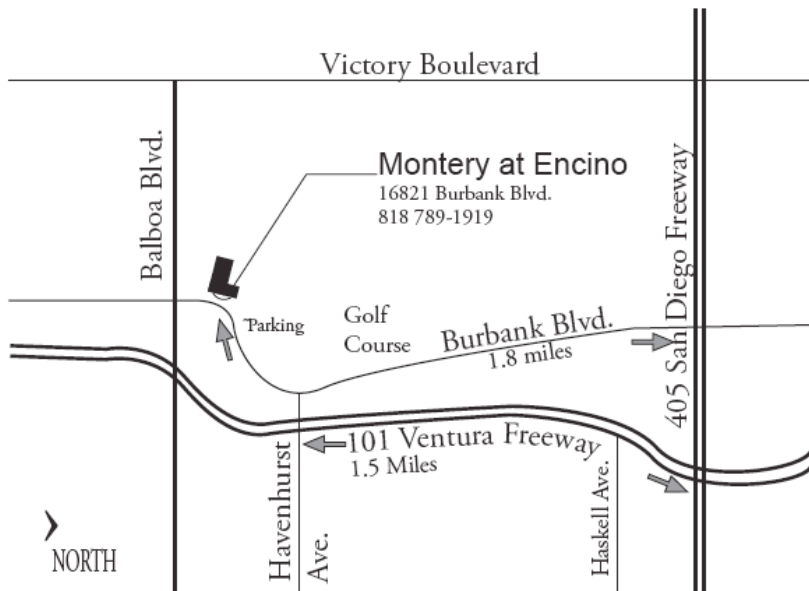
- \$40 Single - Regular
- \$60 Single - Golden Trout
- \$50 Family - Regular
- \$70 Family - Golden Trout

\_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL enclosed

### Mail Check With This Form To:

**Wilderness Fly Fishers**  
P.O. Box 3358  
Santa Monica , CA 90408-3358

Clip & Mail



**Make your dinner reservation** by emailing the venue at [montereyatencino@gmail.com](mailto:montereyatencino@gmail.com) or by calling Michelle at 818-789-1919 Ext. 10 with your name and "SPFF Dinner Reservation" on the Subject line of your email and your entree choice in the body, before the end of business on the Monday preceding the meeting date. The charge for dinner is \$32 or \$5 for non-dining guests, payable at the door by cash or check. If you do not wish to dine, that's fine - there are lots of people to meet and talk with all the time.

Join us online, Visit our website [www.wildernessflyfishers.org](http://www.wildernessflyfishers.org)



# July 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
5	6	7 WFF Board Meeting	8	9	10	11
12 Sun Canyon - Bob Marshal Wilderness WFF Weekend Wade:	13 Sun Canyon - Bob Marshal Wilderness	14 WFF Monthly Meeting Speaker: Zane Mirfin at Sierra Pacific Fly Fishers	15 Sun Canyon - Bob Marshal Wilderness	16 Sun Canyon - Bob Marshal Wilderness	17 Sun Canyon - Bob Marshal Wilderness	18 Sun Canyon - Bob Marshal Wilderness
19	20 WFF Deadline for Newsletter Articles	21	22 WFF Midweek Meander:	23	24	25 WFF Fly Tying
26	27	28	29	30	31	1

